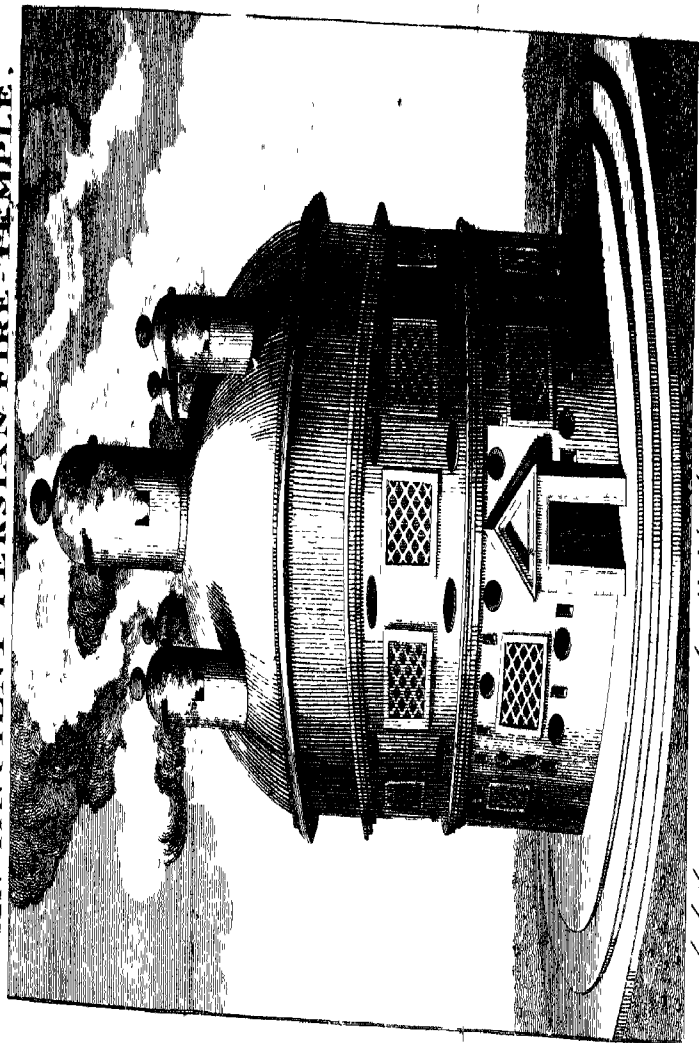
AN ANCIENT PERSIAN FIRE-TEMPLE.

in which the SACRED FLAME kindled by the Rays of the SUN was preserved incessantly Burning & attended Day & Night by the Officiating Mage

from Dr Hyde.

in which the SACRED FLAME kindled by the Rays of the SUN was preserved incessantly Burning, & attended Day & Night by the Officiating Magi

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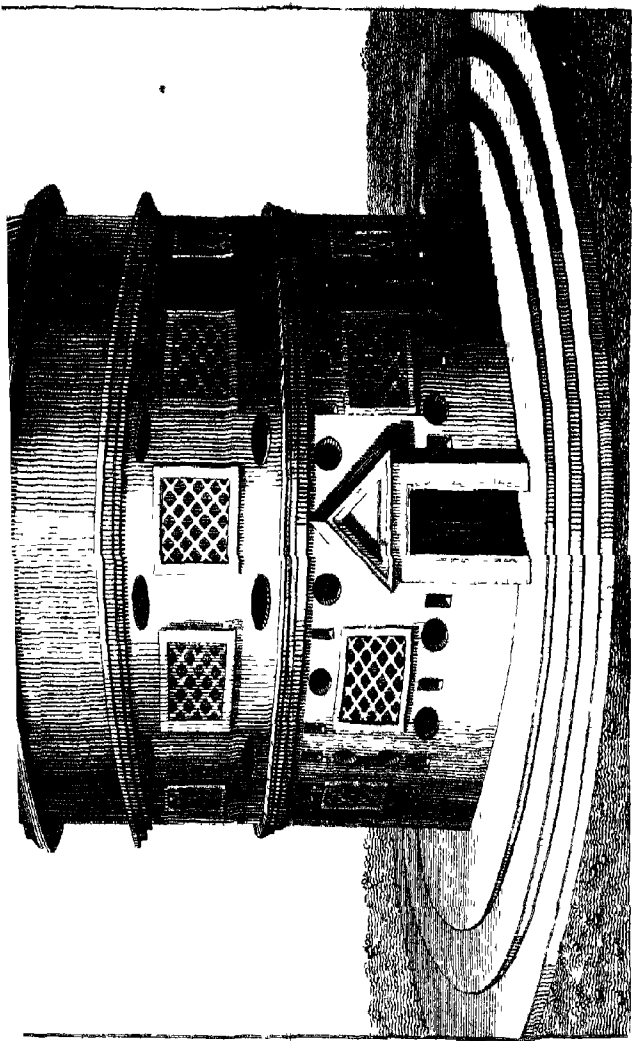
Part I

INDIAN ANTIQUITIES:

O R,

DISSERTATIONS,

RELATIVE TO

THE ANCIENT GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS,
THE PURE SYSTEM OF PRIMEVAL THEOLOGY,
THE GRAND CODE OF CIVIL LAWS,
THE ORIGINAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT, AND
THE VARIOUS AND PROFOUND LITERATURE,

OF HINDOSTAN.

COMPARED, THROUGHOUT, WITH THE
RELIGION, LAWS, GOVERNMENT, and LITERATURE

O F

PERSIA, EGYPT, AND GREECE.

THE WHOLE

Intended as Introductory to, and Illustrative of,

THE HISTORY OF HINDOSTAN.

VOL. I. PART I. CONTINUED:
Containing the DISSERTATIONS on the GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS, and the THEOLOGY, of HINDOSTAN.

L O N D O N:

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TO THE

UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,

THE SUCCEEDING

DISSERTATIONS,

IN WHICH

A NEW PATH

IN LITERATURE

IS ATTEMPTED TO BE EXPLORED,

ARE, WITH PROFOUND RESPECT,

AND WITH BECOMING DIFFIDENCE,

INSCRIBED BY

THOMAS MAURICE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author, finding that even this FIRST PART OF VOLUME THE FIRST contained too many ſheets to be comprized in one volume, without material injury to the plates, has, for the benefit and convenience of his ſubſcribers, at conſiderable additional expence, divided it into two portions. The Second Part will be ready for delivery early in March; and, on the firſt of June, will be publiſhed Volume II. of this extenſive work; containing THE ANCIENT SANSCREET AND ASTRONOMICAL HISTORY OF HINDOSTAN; that is, of the AVATARS, and the SURYA-BANS, and CHANDRA-BANS, or the ancient race of RAJAHS, denominated the CHILDREN OF THE SUN AND MOON. In that volume the claims to unfathomable antiquity of the Brahmin chronologers will be examined, and the MOSAIC HISTORY vindicated.

DISSERTATION II.

THE

THEOLOGY

OF

HINDOSTAN.

INTRODUCTORY PROSPECTUS

OF THE

C O N T E N T S

Of the two firſt Chapters of the

THEOLOGY OF HINDOSTAN.

THIS extenſive ſubject is conſidered in the following chapters under three general heads; and in the courſe of diſcuſſion the Author has examined in what points the RELIGION of the ANCIENT INDIANS reſembled, 1. That of the SCYTHIANS; 2. That of the ANCIENT PERSIANS, 3. That of the ANCIENT EGYPTIANS As the ſubject is complex, and conſequently, as no exact order of arrangement in the compoſition of theſe chapters could be adhered to, he ſolicits the attention of the reader to the ſubjoined EPITOME of their contents. Under the firſt general head the following points ſeemed to demand particular notice. Divine rites were firſt celebrated, and the ſublime precepts of philoſophy firſt taught, in the ſacred ſolitude of GROVES and CAVERNS—the caverns of Salſette and Elephanta undoubtedly ſtupendous ſubterraneous temples of the Deity—the particular rites of religion practiſed, and ſciences taught, in thoſe caverns, reſerved for conſideration under the ſecond general head—the cave of Zoroaſter, of Epictetus, of Pythagoras, and of Mohammed—The aſtoniſhing extent in ancient times of the

consecrated groves of Scythia and of India—the idolatrous devotion practised in consecrated groves severely anathematised in holy writ—the sanguinary
2 rites performed in those of Scythia—the very ancient, but not the original, religion of India proved to be of a sanguinary cast—the NERAMEDHA JUG, or human sacrifice—the ASWAMMEDHA JUG, or horse sacrifice—the GOMEDHA JUG, or sacrifice of the bull—the benevolent Hindoo, and the bloodless law of BRAHMA attempted to be exculpated from the *original* guilt of these sanguinary rites, by supposing an interpolation of the VEDAS, and a possible mixture of the barbarous customs of Scythia with those of India, during the early intercourse of the two nations in the northern regions of Hindostan—that intercourse proved from various circumstances, but particularly from the impressive one of an ancient conquest of Hindostan by Oguz Cawn, and recorded by Abulgazi the Tartar historian The subject considered in a more general point of view—the probable origin of all human sacrifices, that general belief which prevailed throughout the ancient world in the agency of DEMONS, and in the frantic terrors inspired by SUPERSTITION—a description from the Asiatic Researches, and Mr. Holwell of CALLEE, the sable Goddess of India, with an accompanying engraving of that formidable divinity, on whose baleful altars human victims were accustomed to be offered—Human sacrifices seldom practised by the ancients, but in cases of the greatest national emergency; as WAR, FAMINE, PESTILENCE, when the noblest possible victims were selected—The various

rious modes of devoting to death the miserable victim specified—particularly the more horrid rites used by the SCYTHIANS, as described by Herodotus—decapitation, inhumation, or burning, the general mode adopted in India—an instance of the former from the HEETOPADES—human sacrifices common at the funerals of the ancient sovereigns of Scythia, or Tartary, and at those of the Indian Rajahs—instances of the latter from Texeira, Anciennes Relations, Tavernier, and Orme's Historical Fragments.
3 Profound veneration both of the Indians and Scythians for the MANES of their ANCESTORS—exemplified from a passage in Herodotus, from another in the SACONTALA, and from Mr Wilkins's account of the ceremony of the STRADHA in the HEETOPADES. Under the second general head the very remarkable similitude subsisting in the leading principia of the religion of ZOROASTER and BRAHMA, the great legislators of the PERSIAN and Indian empires, is
4. pointed out—particularly in their mutual belief in ONE SUPREME PRESIDING DEITY, governing the universe by inferior agents, and adored in Persia under the name of OROMASDES, and in India, under that of BRAHME—in the parallel powers and similar office of the Mediatorial MITHRA, and the preserver VEESHNU—in those of the malignant AHRIMAN, and the destroying SEEVA—in their account of the conflicts of the good and evil GENII, or DEWTAHS, contending for superiority in the creation—and in their kindred adoration of the SOLAR ORB, and of FIRE. A general view of the mythology of the Hindoos, and an enumeration of the

the deities moſt conſpicuous in that mythology. The SUN and ELEMENTARY FIRE conſidered in both countries as the moſt perfect emblems of Deity. Worſhip paid to the Sun, or SURYA, under the plea of adoring God in that orb, whoſe throne the Perſians ſuppoſed to be ſeated in it, aſſerted to have been in ancient times nearly as general in India, as in Perſia—proved to have been ſo from a very great variety of paſſages inſerted in order from page 190 to 206, and extracted from the VEDAS, the AYEEN AKBERY, and the three principal tranſlations yet made from ancient Sanſcreet writings, viz the GEETA, the HEETOPADES, and the SACONTALA—the ſect of the ſun-worſhippers at this day called SAURA—the account given by Philoſtratus, of a moſt ſuperb temple to the ſun—another from the Ayeen Akbery. —The Indian myſterious triliteral word AUM, the ſame with the Egyptian OM, and both uſed to ſignify the ſolar fire—Fire-temples mentioned in the ſame book to have flouriſhed at Benares, Rai-Jird, and other places, in the time of the ſecond Boodh, about a thouſand years before Chriſt.—The Moon, or CHANDRA, a male deity in Hindoſtan—that very ſingular circumſtance adduced in proof that India has not borrowed the whole of her mythology from Egypt, where the Moon was a female divinity, adored under the name of Isis, and whence the Greeks had their horned goddeſs Io—The Indian Chandra drawn by antelopes—a RABBIT his ſymbol, as the CAT was of the moon in Egypt, for a curious philoſophical reaſon adduced from Plutarch in page 291—FOUNTAINS ſacred to the moon in India

India—no lefs than 360 fountains confecrated to that orb at Kehrow, in Cafhmeer—a circumftance pointed out as exceedingly remarkable, being the number of the days of the ancient year—The two fupreme rajah families of Hindoftan denominated SURYA-BANS, and CHANDRA-BANS, or children of the fun and moon—The elements perfonified and venerated under various names—AGNEE—VARUNA-PAVAN—CREESHNA, the Indian Apollo—CARTICEYA, the Indian Mars—LACHSMEE, the Indian Ceres—SERASWATI, the Indian Minerva—CAMA, the Indian god of love—BHAVANI, the Indian Venus, &c. &c —From adoring God in the fun, the Orientals proceeded by degrees to worfhip the planetary train—that worfhip promoted by their general cultivation of the fcience of aftronomy—An enlarged view taken of the ancient SABIAN SUPERSTITION—its rapid progrefs over all the Eaft—ftigmatized in Job and the prophetic writings—The rife and progrefs of aftronomy in Afia—purfued with uncommon ardour in India—remains of ftupendous aftronomical inftruments at the obfervatory of Benares, and other places. —The Indians believed the ftars to be exactly what the Phœnicians imagined their ZOPHESAMIN to be, ANIMATED INTELLIGENCES—of the former, evidence adduced from the Ayeen Akbery; of the latter, proof brought from Bifhop Cumberland's Sanchoniatho—Their greateft princes, legiflators, and heroes, confequently exalted to the fkies—reprefentative images formed of them—thofe images by degrees adored inftead of their originals—Various animals, as their refpective fymbols, affigned to them by

by superstition—those animals venerated in their turn—A retrospective survey of the deities and symbols of Egypt, and a short parallel, preparatory to one more extended, of those deities, and their symbols, with the Indian divinities and symbols—The bull of OSIRIS—the bull of SEEVA—SERPENTS sacred in both countries—the EAGLE of Jove—the GARUDA, or eagle of VEESHNU—That survey extended to the temples of either country—the similitude astonishing, but reserved for full examination after the caverns of Salsette and Elephanta shall have been described—The stupendous mysteries of superstition practised in them attempted to be investigated, and the profound arcana taught in them unfolded—The Author enters upon that task, hitherto unaccomplished, and even unattempted by the greatest Indian scholars, and the most celebrated Asiatic travellers, with diffidence, blended with firmness, resulting from long and elaborate investigation into such books of antiquity as treat of CAVERNS, and such modern publications as best describe the GROTTOES of Egypt, the ROCKY SUBTERRANEOUS shrines of MITHRA, and the particular caverns in question—The authors, in this part, more immediately consulted, are Porphyry, in his very curious and beautiful treatise de ANTRO NYMPHARUM; Mr. Norden's Account, and elegant engravings, of the EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES; and Montfaucon and Dr. Hyde on the MITHRATIC CAVES, RITES, and SYMBOLS—Convinced that the mystery, considered by M. Anquetil Du Perron, and M. Niebuhr, as inscrutable, was only to be solved by a still closer examination of the principles of the ZEND and

and the VEDAS, by means of Dr Hyde and Sir William Jones, he attempts to investigate still deeper those sacred depositories of either religion—He enters with some minuteness into the history of Zoroaster the REFORMER, not the INVENTOR, of the Magian religion, he traces his "secret footsteps," and those of Darius Hystaspes, his royal patron, to the "woody solitudes" (as they are expressly called by Ammianus Marcellinus) of the venerable BRACHMANS in "Upper India," most probably the mountains of NAUGRACUT, and, again following the reformer back to Persia, after having been instructed in the most profound and mysterious rites practised in their consecrated caverns, attentively marks his motions, and observes his imitative conduct. From the invaluable treatise of Porphyry, above mentioned, the author is enabled to describe the particular ornaments of that lonely CAVE to which he afterwards retired in Media, "the astronomical symbols, and other mathematical apparatus," with which it was decorated, and from his reviving, throughout Persia and Media, the veneration for fire, as well as his erecting the stupendous FIRE TEMPLE at Balk, the author forms those conclusions which are submitted to the reader in the pages more immediately following—The author supports his deductions, by a very curious passage, given at large by Origen, from Celsus, one of the most learned philosophers among the ancients, concerning the SEVEN GATES, emblematical of the SEVEN PLANETS, erected in the MITHRATIC caverns, through which the sydereal Metempsychosis was performed, and contrasts that

 passage

paſſage with others cited from the Ayeen Akbery, in proof that there actually did exiſt, even ſo late as in Abul Fazil's time, among the rocky mountains in Upper Hindoſtan, EXCAVATIONS the moſt numerous and prodigious, and CARVED IDOLS of the moſt aſtoniſhing fabrication.

A general view taken, in page 239, & *ſeq.* of the ſculptured imagery in the caverns of Elephanta, in which are exhibited, as well the ſubſtance of all the preceding deſcriptions, as the reſpective hypotheſes formed from the ſurvey of them by French and Engliſh travellers.—Thoſe of Niebuhr by far the moſt correct and ſatiſfactory—A more particular deſcription of the Elephanta Pagoda, its ſtyle of architecture, dimenſions, ornaments, receſſes, ciſterns for the water of purification, &c &c—The ſtupendous figure of the grand Indian triad of Deity, BRAHMA, VEESHNU, and SEEVA, minutely deſcribed, and illuſtrated by an accurate engraving—The other more remarkable ſtatues ſucceſſively delineated—Both the figures, and their ornamental ſymbols plainly alluſive to the theological notions at this day prevalent among the Hindoos.—The Hindoo nation divided into innumerable ſects, but ultimately branched forth into two principal ones, that of VEESHNU, and that of MAHADEO, or SEEVA, i. e the worſhipers of the Deity, in his *preſerving*, and his *deſtroying* capacity.—The ſyſtem of religion profeſſed by the former, throughout this Diſſertation, repreſented as the primitive, mild, benevolent ſyſtem of theology originally eſtabliſhed in Hindoſtan—That profeſſed by the latter

latter full of terror, and productive of the most licentious practices—The indecent worship of SEEVA, his rites and symbols described, with as much delicacy as possible, consistently with perspicuity. The LINGAM similar to the PHALLUS of the Greeks, and the PRIAPUS of the Romans—The sacred recess, or Sacellum, of SEEVA—An extended survey of that curious, but degrading superstition—The Lingam an emblem, in India, of the creative power—Allotted as a symbol to Seeva the DESTRUCTIVE POWER, upon that philosophical principle of the Brahmins, that "to *destroy*, is only to *generate*, and *re-produce*, in another way"—The author now commences the parallel of the INDIAN and EGYPTIAN systems of theology, in which this base species of worship forms the first distinguishing feature—A description of the origin of Phallic worship in Egypt, from Diodorus Siculus—An instance exhibited from Athenæus, of the splendour displayed at a Phallic festival, celebrated in Egypt by Ptolemy Philadelphus. The same with that of BAAL-PEOR in Scripture—The Greeks borrowed and infamously refined upon it, in their orgies of Bacchus, p 265—The remarkable similitude of a fact recorded in a prophane writer, relative to the introduction of the PHALLICA at Athens, and a circumstance related in Scripture, in regard to the Philistines who had captured and profaned the ark of God—The former history in the profane writer no forgery from the latter, as asserted by Patrick and Bochart, but the mode of punishment and propitiation agreeable to the usage of eastern countries—

 Demon-

Demonſtrated to be ſo by a paſſage in Tavernier's Voyages in India, and another in the Sketches of Mr. Crauford.—The author apologizes for going ſo largely into ſo diſagreeable a ſubject, but affirms, that without the explanation, the Indian ſyſtem of theology, of which it engroſſes ſo large a portion, would be utterly unintelligible.—He concludes it for the preſent, ſince the enormities promoted by the doctrine muſt be noticed in a ſucceeding part of the Diſſertation, by diſplaying its atrocioufneſs, and refers back, for the genuine origin of ſuch nefarious rites, to the principles and practices of that vitiated ſon of NOAH, the earlieſt idolater of the poſt-diluvian world, who led the firſt colony from Chaldæa to the banks of the Nile.—That the moſt venerated IDOLS of India are the ATTRIBUTES OF GOD perſonified, or RAJAHS exalted, by their piety or bravery, to the rank of divinities, muſt be evident, from the general view of this Pantheon of India, ſince ſuperior power could not be diſplayed in hieroglyphic repreſentation more forcibly, than by *a figure with numerous hands*, nor excelling wiſdom more aptly delineated than by *a circle of heads*, ſince the radiated *crown of glory* naturally points out the *divinity* of the poſſeſſor, and the *ſerpent*, from his great vigour and revireſcence, is equally in Egypt and in India, the known emblem of *deity*.—The author next proceeds to examine the more numerous, and ſcarcely leſs aſtoniſhing excavations of CANARAH, in the iſland of Salſette—The moſt authentic accounts of them, thoſe inſerted in the ſeventh volume of the Archæologia, and in the preliminary diſcourſe to Mr

Anque-

Anquetil's Zend-Avesta—The island itself, and the external appearance of the caverns described, p. 271.—The rocks themselves, in which they are hewn, bear strong marks of calcination—Asserted by M. Anquetil to be hewn by the chissel, into a pyramidal form—Pyramids so constructed to resemble the figure of a flame of fire—The external figure adduced as probable proof of the ancient internal worship—The caverns of Canarah, from their appearance, denominated by the natives "the city of Canarah"—A general description of the caverns, from p. 272 to 277—The eminences of the rocks probably used by the Brahmins as observatories—The architecture considered—This pagoda, from its height, and from its arched roof, far more magnificent than that of Elephanta—The tanks for ablution numerous, and the temple of SEEVA, with the PHALLUS, every where discernible—Visible recesses for the lamps that, probably, were kept continually burning—The astonishing height of the GREAT ALTAR, and magnitude of the colossal statues—An attempt to display, in animated language, the stupendous magnificence and splendour of the Mithratic worship, p 283—The origin of hieroglyphics—The hieroglyphics of Egypt compared with those of India—The signs of the Indian zodiac still visible on the cornices of the cavern Pagodas—The great similarity, in many points, between the INDIANS and CHINESE—The primeval legislator, and, probably, the people of either country originally the same—A MITHRATIC GROTTO discovered in Egypt, and described by M. Savary, p 295—A remarkable description, in Ezekiel,

krel, of a cavern, ſuppoſed by the author to be Mi-thratic—or rather the MYSTIC CELL of OSIRIS—Oſiris only the African appellative of Mithra—A deſcription of the MENSA ISIACA, or Bembine table, and the hieroglyphics engraved upon it, p. 302.—compared with thoſe in Salſette and Elephanta—After taking an extenſive ſurvey of the growth, progreſs, and extinction, at Rome, of the Mithratic devotion, the author proceeds to examine the moral and philoſophical doctrines taught by the Brahmans, in their cavern receſſes—The Metempſychoſis the moſt diſtinguiſhed of thoſe doctrines—falſely aſcribed to Pythagoras—originated in India, and firſt promulged in the GEETA of VYASA, the PLATO of India, many centuries before the birth of Pythagoras—extracts from the GEETA in proof of that aſſertion—various paſſages in the SACONTALA, and the HEETOPADES, ſtrongly corroborative of it, exhibited from page 308, to page 314—The doctrine of the Metempſychoſis, or the notion of this life being a probationary ſtate, productive in India of the moſt excruciating and horrible penances, in order by thoſe penances to obtain MOKSH, or ſupreme happineſs—A deſcription of a YOGEE, in the act of penance, from the Sacontala—The ſupreme happineſs of BRAHME a ſtate of divine abſorption—The doctrine of degenerate ſpirits migrating through various BOOBUNS, or ſpheres, and through animal bodies, to be traced to ſome corrupted tradition of the fallen angels—The ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES, as deſcribed by Jamblicus and Proclus, and detailed by Warburton in the Divine Legation, compared with

with the myſterious rites probably practiſed in the caverns of India—The genuine theology of India purer in its principles than any other profeſſed in the world, except the Chriſtian—juſtly ſtated to be ſo by Mr. Haſtings, in his elegant letter to Mr. Nathaniel Smith, prefixed to the Geeta—Some moſt ſublime paſſages produced in proof from that Epiſode, and from a tranſlation of the BHAGAVAT, by Sir William Jones—Certain paſſages in Scripture ſurpriſingly conſonant to theſe extracts—Whether this might be derived from any poſſible connection with the Hebrews?—The fact itſelf, of any general intercourſe between the two nations, denied—and the aſſertions of Poſtellus, Dr. Hyde, and others, deriving BRAHMA from ABRAHAM, confuted—Hamilton's account of a Jew colony at Cranganore, on the coaſt of Malabar, detailed and conſidered—poſſibly the remains of the ten tribes—The VEDAS, however, written at a period far more ancient than that diſperſion, and conſequently the primitive uncorrupted religion of Brahma could only be derived to them from NOAH, the MENU of the Sanſcreet Theologians, or elſe from his more immediate deſcendants of the righteous line of Seth, who firſt ſettled in India.—The author returns to the parallel of the MYSTERIES of India and Greece.—However pure the primeval theology of India, like all the ſyſtems of religion practiſed in every nation of the ancient world, it gradually declined in its purity, through the venality, ſervility, or ambition, of ſucceſſive prieſts— Its progreſs in degeneracy traced from the age of VYASA to the preſent day—The firſt cauſe

of

of that degeneracy stated to be the symbolizing of the ATTRIBUTES of the Deity—in the veneration paid to brave and pious RAJAHS deceased, especially to those in whom the great Indian deity, Veeshnu became incarnate—exemplified in the three RAMAS—But as the *amiable attributes* of God were personified and venerated by the Indians; so was that timid race induced, by terror, to deify the evil dæmons, and their *horrible attributes*—The walls of ELEPHANTA and SALSETTE crowded with images allusive to the majestic attributes of God, and the magnified virtues of men—The whole train of false deities introduced into the mysteries—The caverns of Elephanta and Salsette formed with dark ailes, and winding passages, like the mystic cells of Egypt, and the temple of Ceres at Eleusis—The PHALLUS of BACCHUS, and the LINGAM of MAHADEO, principal objects in the mystic shews—The enormities consequent of the former gross system of worship in Greece and Rome, and of the latter in India, depicted—The former from Herodotus and Livy, the latter from Renaudot and Tavernier—The prostitutions at the temple of the Dea Syria in honour of MYLITTA, similar to those of the WOMEN OF THE IDOL in the pagodas of India—particular account of the education and accomplishments of the latter, p. 339—342.—The surrounding horrors that enveloped the ASPIRANT, and the final raptures that attended INITIATION, described from Apuleius, Dion Chrysostome, and Plato, p. 342, *et seq.*—Some curious particulars, related by MEURSIUS, in regard to the NUMEROUS ABLUTIONS in the Grecian mysteries, compared

compared with those recounted in the Ayeen Akbery, as necessary to be undergone by the BERHEM CHAREE, or Brahmin of the first degree—Mr. Bryant's assertion, that the rites of ISIS and OSIRIS were originally instituted in memory of the deluge, considered and corroborated, by the similar rites of the Brahmins—The author pledges himself to prove, that there are Sanscreet records of a GENERAL DELUGE in Hindostan—The account of the MYSTERIES concluded, with an enumeration of other parallel circumstances, from page 345 to 357—An enquiry who were the fabricators of the caverns of SALSETTE and ELEPHANTA—Whether the EGYPTIANS?—The subterraneous grottos and caverns of the THEBAIS cursorily described from Norden and Savary—Whether the ÆTHIOPIANS?—An account from Ludolphus of the Æthiopian rock-temples—A curious passage apparently corroborative of such a supposition from the ARCHÆOLOGIA—Another remarkable passage adduced from Ezekiel, in proof that images resembling those in the Indian caverns, decked with similar ornaments, and painted with vermillion, were adored in CHALDEA—the whole, consequently, relics of the ancient prevailing SABIAN SUPERSTITION, or WORSHIP OF THE HOST OF HEAVEN.

The author, emerging from the gloom of SUBTERRANEOUS pagodas, introduces his readers into the splendid temples that adorn the surface of Hindostan—their height, extent, and the magnitude of the stones with which they are built, stupendous—instanced in the magnificent portico of CHILLAMBRUM, and the circumference of the walls of SERING-

HAM—The most ancient pagodas erected in the form of pyramids, with only one door—and illuminated by lamps kept constantly burning—properly compared by MANDELSLO to caves—The more modern pagodas erected in a better style of architecture, and richly decorated within with gildings, carved work, and painting—without, entirely covered with sculptured animals—The five most venerated pagodas of India, *viz.* that of JAGGERNAUT—that of BENARES,—that of MATTRA—that of TRIPETTY—and that of SERINGHAM, successively and minutely described from TAVERNIER and others, in pages 368, 369, *et seq* to p 378—An affecting story relative to the first defilement of Seringham by European armies—The amazing revenues which these and other pagodas anciently enjoyed—40,000 souls supported by the revenues of SERINGHAM alone—A more accurate survey of their internal sculptures, and a description of the monstrous idols adored in them, p 381—EGYPT and INDIA seem to have assembled in these pagodas the animals deemed more peculiarly sacred in each country—as, for instance, the MEMPHIAN BULL—the RAM, sacred to JUPITER—and the GOAT, to PAN—are seen blended with the APE of RAMA—the RHINOCEROS—and the ELEPHANT—An extensive investigation is now entered into on that disputed point, whether INDIA or EGYPT be the elder empire, and which first imparted its rites of superstition to the other—The opinion of KIRCHER, relative to the settling in India of the Egyptian priests, driven from their country by the ravages of CAMBYSES, first considered, p 384.—The opinion of KEMPFER, in regard

gard to the great Indian saint, BUDHA SAKIA, (in other words, the god BOODH)—the opinion of both those antiquarians highly probable, and apparently supported by that of Sir W. JONES, given in the Asiatic Researches, on the subject of BOODH—and on the great resemblance subsisting both in the name and the worship of the Egyptian ISIS and OSIRIS, and the Indian ESWARA and ISA—The result of Sir WILLIAM's enquiry concerning a colony of priests supposed to have settled at TIRHOOT, in North BAHAR—on the whole favourable to such a supposition, p. 387 *et passim*—Mr CHAMBERS's account of the ruins of Mavalipuram—of the SOMMONACODOM, or stone deity of the SIAMESE—and of the superstition of BOODH—Additional evidence of an early and familiar intercourse subsisting between the EGYPTIANS and INDIANS—adduced from page 391 to 397—The structure of their temples similar in point of massy solidity, magnitude, and extent—A cursory comparison of a few of the principal structures of each country, preparatory to a more extensive parallel—Some striking circumstances of national resemblance enumerated, as, first, in their mutual veneration of the sacred LOTOS—A description of that flower from Herodotus, and a late traveller, M. Savary—Secondly, In their early cultivation of the SUGAR-CANE—Thirdly, In their ancient, and, once, universal diet having consisted of VEGETABLES—Fourthly, in their mutually possessing A SACRED SACERDOTAL LANGUAGE, called in India the DEVANAGARI—Fifthly, in the division of the people into TRIBES or CASTS—Sixthly, in the numerous ABLU-

TIONS practised by both people—and, finally, in their universal reverence of the Cow and the SERPENT—A digressive APOSTROPHE, describing the ancient grandeur, and lamenting the humbled situation of EGYPT, p 399.—A description of her stupendous but mouldering edifices, from the latest traveller, M SAVARY—The ruins of the superb temple of ISMANDES, p 400—of ACHMOUNAIN, p. 402—of CARNAK, p 403—of LUXOR, p 405, &c.

The author commences the survey of the theological rites of Hindostan—as cultivated in periods less remote, and at the present day—General division of the Hindoos into four grand tribes, or casts—the tribe of BRAHMA—the tribe of KHETTRI—the tribe of BICE—the tribe of SOODER—The Brahmins alone permitted to read the VEDAS—those vedas, in p 226 preceding, explained to have been originally only three, and denominated the RIIG veda—the YAJUSH veda—and the SAMAN veda—All three comprized under the name RIGYAJUHSAMA—and the fourth, or ATHARVA VEDA, proved from internal evidence to be far more modern—The English, more than any other European nations, have contributed to remove the veil that anciently obscured the genuine religion of Brahma, inculcated in the Vedas, and other Sanscreet theological treatises—An attempt of the emperor Akbar to penetrate behind that veil—The affecting story of FEIZI, and his Brahmin preceptor, p. 411—An account of the Sanscreet language, extracted from Sir William Jones, and Mr Halhed, p 417—The author next enters into the investigation of the subject of the INDIAN TRIAD OF DEITY, of which an accurate

late engraving forms the frontispiece of the volume. —Any comparison of the Indian and Christian TRINITY an insult to the latter, from the immense disparity of the respective characters, p 425 —An extensive survey of the doctrine of the CHRISTIAN TRINITY— That doctrine delivered down from the ancient Patriarchs, and diffused over the East, during the migration and dispersion of their Hebrew posterity—demonstrated to be plainly revealed in the Old Testament, and to have been believed and taught by the JEWISH RABBI, long previous to the birth of PLATO, and the coming of CHRIST—The true origin of that rancour and contempt with which the Jews are inflamed against the MESSIAH unfolded, p 434, *et seq* —Some objections, urged by sceptical opponents against the TRINITY, answered, p 435, *et seq* —The Jews pay less deference to the WRITTEN, than to the ORAL, LAW which they assert to have been delivered to Moses on Sinai—An historical account of the celebrated code of Jewish traditions collected by Rabbi JUDAH, THE HOLY, and called, THE MISNA, p 448—Of the two TALMUDS of JERUSALEM and BABYLON, p 451 and of the two TARGUMS of ONKELOS, and JONATHAN, p 453 —The former TARGUM the most concise and pure paraphrase—the latter more diffuse, and supposed to have been interpolated—A progressive view taken of the passages in Scripture establishing, some a PLURALITY, and others so express upon the PERSONAL AGENCY, and DIVINE ATTRIBUTES of the MIMRA, or LOGOS, and the RUAH HAKKODESH, or HOLY SPIRIT, as plainly to evince a TRINITY of divine HYPOSTASES subsisting in the Godhead—The preceding

ceding quotations illuſtrated, in regard to the OLD Teſtament, by a variety of extracts from the TARGUMS, and corroborated, in regard to the NEW, by an exhibition of ſimilar ſentiments and paſſages in the writings of PHILO-JUDÆUS, a learned Jew of Alexandria, the whole extending through above one hundred pages of this volume—The ſymbols of the Jews illuſtrative of this doctrine conſidered, but particularly the CHERUBIM—with an engraving of the CHERUBIM—The ſentiments of the ancient Rabbies exhibited—The manner in which the High-Prieſt gave his ſolemn benediction to the people deſcribed, and the form in which he diſpoſed his fingers repreſented by an engraving, copied from Athanaſius Kircher—The mode in which they deſignated the incommunicable name of JEHOVAH, viz. by THREE JODS and a CIRCLE, emblematical of a TRINITY in Unity—that ſymbol exhibited—In the ancient myſtical character ſuppoſed, like the DEVANAGARI character of India, to have been revealed BY ANGELS, the JOD, the firſt initial letter of that name, accompanied with a TRIANGLE—very remarkable, becauſe, according to Kircher, the EGYPTIAN ſymbol of the Deity, or NUMEN TRIPLEX, was a TRIANGLE—The three perſons in the DIVINE ESSENCE compared, by thoſe Rabbies, to the three collateral branches of the Hebrew letter SCHIN—That letter therefore conſpicuouſly engraved on the ancient PHYLACTERY which the Jews, according to the divine command, wore on the head—Engravings, diſplaying of theſe various ſymbols, in the courſe of the enquiry, preſented

ſented to the reader—An account of the famous book of ZOHAR, and of the SEPHIR JETZIRAH, or book of Abraham—A review of the Pagan TRINITIES—The ORACLES of ZOROASTER conſidered—contain internal evidence that they are not wholly ſpurious—that aſſertion proved in a ſhort compariſon of the theoretic ſyſtem of theology laid down in thoſe oracles, and the practical worſhip of the Chaldeans, Perſians, and Indians—The THREE PRINCIPLES mentioned in the Zoroaſtrian, or Chaldaic oracles, the moſt early corruption of the doctrine of the Hebrew Trinity—The Perſian Triad of deity, OROMASDES, MITHRAS, ARIMANIUS, or, rather, the three-fold power of the God MITHRA, thence called TRIPLASIOS, to be referred to the ſame origin—The remains of this doctrine remarkably apparent in India, not only in the triad, BRAHMA, VEESHNU, and SEEVA, but in various ſymbolic characters of that myſtic Triad recapitulated and exhibited—An account of a medal found in Siberia, on which is engraved the figure of the TRIUNE GOD, accompanied with a deſcription in Tangutian characters, explained by Colonel Grant, and with an engraving of it from Parſons's Remains of Japhet—The Peruvians deſcribed by Acoſta as worſhipping an idol denominated TANGA-TANGA, which they aſſert to mean ONE IN THREE, and THREE IN ONE—A ſhort enquiry entered into, by what channel a doctrine ſo improbable to have been the fabrication of mere human reaſon, as that of a Trinity in Unity, could be propagated among a nation ſo remote from the Hebrews as the Peruvian—The

great

great THREE-HEADED IDOL of Japan, described from Kempfer—an engraving of that idol from the same author—The Trinity of Egypt considered—represented by a GLOBE, a WING, and a SERPENT—Its meaning investigated, and an engraving of it exhibited which was copied from the front of the ruins of the superb temple of LUXOR, by Mr. Norden, in his Antiquities of Egypt—An account of the TRINITY of divine persons, in the Hymns attributed to Orpheus—The doctrines relative to a Trinity taught by PYTHAGORAS, PARMENIDES, and PLATO—A conclusive retrospect on the subject, and a general recapitulation of the principal arguments adduced in proof of the original position, that this doctrine *was* originally revealed from heaven to the ancestors of the human race, known to the Hebrew patriarchs, and propagated by themselves and their posterity, during their various migrations and dispersions throughout the world—A summary account of the opinions at present entertained by the Jews relative to the expected advent of the MESSIAH—Calculations formerly made concerning that event from the course of the stars—Those calculations now forbidden, by a most tremendous curse, in the GEMARA, that the bowels of the calculator may burst asunder—The execration, how evaded by ABARBANEL, the great commentator on the Pentateuch—His own extravagant assertions, with respect to the constellations, and their influence, enumerated—His particular computation of the times of the Messiah proved to be false, by the event—The monstrous conceptions of the Modern

Jews,

Jews, relative to the great feaſt at which the ſecond Meſſiah, after the overthrow of the enemies of the Jews, is to entertain the whole aſſembled race of Judah, from Abraham downwards, in the renovated city of Jeruſalem, (according to the Rabbies cited by Baſnage) with the fleſh of the female LEVIATHAN, ſalted by God from the beginning of time, and preſerved as an exquiſite reliſh for that banquet of his SON—They are alſo to be regaled with the female BEHEMOTH, which eats the graſs of 1000 mountains in one day, according to Pſalm l. 10 and with the fleſh of the ſtupendous bird ZIZ. or BARIUCHNL, whoſe extended wings obſcured the ſun—Wine made of the grapes of paradiſe, and treaſured in the vault of Adam, alſo reſerved for that feaſt—The author apologizes, and gives his reaſons for mentioning theſe rabbinnical vagaries, *viz.* to ſhew their perverſion of ſcripture texts, and their ſenſual and carnal notions of what is purely ſpiritual, among which may be numbered, that moſt baleful ſpring of all their calamities, the perſuaſion that the MESSIAH IS YET TO COME, A MIGHTY TEMPORAL PRINCE—The author now returns to the inveſtigation of the points remaining to be conſidered in the THEOLOGY of the Brahmins—According to Diodorus Siculus, the ancient Brachmans acknowledged all their civil and eccleſiaſtical inſtitutions to be derived from DIONYSIUS—An enquiry commenced concerning the true INDIAN BACCHUS—The Indians, in their relations to the Greeks, to flatter their conquerors, artfully applied the adventures of their great HERO and GOD RAMA,

to the Grecian Dionyſius—The true Dionyſius, of antiquity aſſerted to be no other than NOAH—and, probably, the firſt perſon who led a colony to India from Armenia, after the flood, was an immediate deſcendant of the more virtuous line of that patriarch, who eſtabliſhed the original, mild, and patriarchal form of government which originally prevailed in India, and of which many traces to this day remain—The early and acknowledged maturity of the ſciences in India, and other perplexing phœnomena relative to that country, attempted to be accounted for, by ſuppoſing, with Mr. Bryant, that colony to have migrated, not from Shinaar, but from Ararat, previous to the erection of Babel, and the confuſion of tongues—The CUTHITES ejected by the vengeance of God from SHINAAR, and, defeated by the confederated ſovereigns of the line of Shem, invade India in various directions—from the North by the paſs of Hurdwar—and, from the regions on the weſtern frontiers, called from them INDIA-SCYTHIA—The former eſtabliſhed themſelves on the Ganges, and formed that vaſt eaſtern empire ſo celebrated in Sanſcreet hiſtories, of which the city of OWDH was the capital, and the Hindoo God and prophet RAMA, the ſon of CUSH, the firſt potent ſovereign—the latter founded the equally renowned empire of the Weſt, and, poſſibly, the capital of that empire was either HASTINAPOOR, or BRAHMINABAD—The author aſſigns his reaſons for adopting this hypotheſis, which are founded on the martial and enterprizing character of the SONS OF HAM—their attachment

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to the facred gloom of CAVERNS—and the acknowledged fkill in architecture of that race, who erected the ftupendous pyramids of Egypt—He urges that this hypothefis accounts for the origin of the TWO GREAT SECTS of India, and their varying theology—for the veneration which the Indians entertain for Cows and SERPENTS, the predominant fuperftition of Egypt—their adoration of the SOLAR ORB—their worfhip of the PHALLUS—and their fanguinary facrifices of MEN and BEASTS.—The Differtations of Sir William Jones, and others, on the Indians, very decifively point towards fome fuch hypothefis as this—fince they evince, that, at fome remote period, there has been a general convulfion in the civil and religious conftitution of India—that a great and remarkable change has taken place in the manners and opinions of the Hindoos—and fince the myftery of the great battle of the MAHABBARAT, in which fons and brothers fell in a general and promifcuous carnage, can only be refolved by fuch a fuppofition—The true character of the venerable Brachman of antiquity delineated—The fevere tortures enumerated, which they underwent in their progrefs through the CHAR ASHERUM, or FOUR DEGREES of probation, tortures which they bore with a conftancy and with a fortitude worthy of a more enlightened religion, and more animating rewards.

END OF THE INTRODUCTORY PROSPECTUS OF THE TWO FIRST CHAPTERS OF THE THEOLOGY OF HINDOSTAN.

CHAP. I.

Of the RELIGION *of the* ANCIENT INDIANS, *in what points it reſembled that of the* SCYTHIANS *— that of the* ANCIENT PERSIANS *— and that of the* ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

I Am now entering upon a ſubject, of which the MAGNITUDE and INTRICACY fill me with awe and apprehenſion. In the comprehenſive view which it is my intention to take of this important and diſputed topic, ſo many various and complicated circumſtances preſs for conſideration, that I am almoſt at a loſs from what point to commence the wide ſurvey. If a leſs degree of order and connection than I could wiſh ſhould appear in my reflections on this head of the THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES, maintained from age to age by the Hindoos, the reader will, I hope, candidly impute the defect to the obſcure, the extenſive, and complex, nature of the ſubject under examination.

During the intercourſe which the ancients maintained with India, by means of the conqueſts of ALEXANDER, and the commerce afterwards carried on with the nations inhabiting the peninſula, they were able to obtain a partial inſight into their religious inſtitutions, which, as far as known to them, have been

faithfully transmitted to posterity, in the writings of Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Pliny. Some of the outlines which they have drawn are indeed just and striking; but the impenetrable veil, which the craft of the INDIAN as well as of the EGYPTIAN priesthood had thrown over the more solemn mysteries of the religion they professed, precluded any very intimate acquaintance with its principles. Of the genuine precepts and the more sublime doctrines of BRAHMA, whether considered as a theologist, or as a legislator, as they are now known to us through the GEETA and the GENTOO CODE, the ancients were as entirely ignorant as ever the European conquerors of India themselves, to their disgrace, continued till the middle of the present century, when Mr. Holwell, Mr. Dow, and, in still more recent periods, Mr. Halhed, Sir William Jones, and Mr. Wilkins, made the most indefatigable and successful efforts to investigate them. To the laborious researches of these gentlemen is the public indebted for all the original knowledge of which they are now in possession, both in regard to the true principles of the theology of the Hindoos contained in the VEDAS,* and

* The four sacred volumes of India, so denominated from VEDA, a SANSCREET root, signifying, TO KNOW.

and the profound wiſdom and equity diſplayed in the code of their laws. The lateſt information, however, and that on which I ſhall principally depend, is by far the moſt authentic; for, to the allegorical ſyſtem which Mr. Holwell has laboured to eſtabliſh, there are material objections; and no very great ſtreſs can be laid on any information, relative to that religion, given in the prefatory diſſertation of Mr. Dow, becauſe a very able ſcholar in Sanſcreet literature has proved the ingenious writer's palpable deficiency in the knowledge of thoſe ſacred writings, from his having preſented to the public, as an authentic ſpecimen of the ſeveral VEDAS, four aſhlogues, or ſtanzas, which he affirms have not the leaſt affinity or ſimilitude whatſoever to thoſe books. The truth of this aſſertion, Mr. Halhed* has placed beyond the poſſibility of doubt, by a particular quotation of the firſt of thoſe aſhlogues, with the ſtanzas immediately preceding and ſubſequent, as they ſtand in a collection of Sanſcreet poems, of very ancient date indeed, but totally unconnected with the ſubject of religion. While, however, I am compelled thus early to point

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* See Mr. Dow's prefatory diſſertation to his tranſlation of Feriſhta, vol. i. p 30. and Mr. Halhed's preface to the code of Gentoo laws, p. 32, 4to. edition.

out the defects of this writer, it is but justice to add, that even Mr. Halhed himself has acknowledged, that, in other respects, he is "an author of considerable merit;" and calls his translation of Ferishta "an elegant translation." What is most worthy of our attention, in the two former of those writers, shall be first noticed; new rays of light from the pages of the latter will, as we advance, illuminate the subject. I think it necessary, however, to begin my inquiries at a period far remote from that of their immediate investigation.

The gloomy CAVERN, and the consecrated GROVE, bore witness to the earliest devotions of mankind. The deep shade, the solemn silence, the profound solitude, of such places, inspired the contemplative soul with a kind of holy horror, and cherished in it the seeds of virtue and religion. The same circumstances were found equally favourable to the propagation of science, and tended to impress upon the minds of the hearers the awful dictates of truth and wisdom. The BRAHMINS of Asia, and the DRUIDS of Europe, were therefore constantly to be found in the recesses of the sacred grotto, and in the bosom of the embowering forest. Here, undisturbed,

disturbed, they chanted forth their devout orisons to their Creator; here they practised the severities of bodily mortification; here they taught mankind the vanity of wealth, the folly of power, and the madness of ambition. All Asia beside cannot boast such august and admirable monuments of antiquity as the caverns of SALSETTE and ELEPHANTA, and the sculptures that adorn them. I consider them, not only as stupendous subterraneous temples of the deity, but as occasionally used by the Brahmins for inculcating the profoundest arcana of those sciences, for which they were so widely celebrated throughout the East. What were the religious rites practised, and what the sciences taught in those caverns, I shall reserve for ample investigation under the second general head. In the mean time it may be observed that from the deep obscurity of caverns and forests, have, in every age, issued the light of philosophy and the beams of religion. ZOROASTER, or ZERDUSHT, the great reformer of the sect of the Persian Magi, between whose doctrines and those of BRAHMA I shall hereafter, in many points, trace a striking resemblance, amidst the gloom of a cavern, composed his celebrated system of theological institutions, which filled twelve

volumes, each consisting of a hundred skins of vellum, and was called the ZEND-AVESTA*. The renowned philosophers, Epictetus, and Pythagoras, who was himself the scholar of Zoroaster,† sought wisdom in the solitary cell. Even the venerable prophets of the true religion took up their abode in the solitudes of the desert; and the herald of the MESSIAH, whose meat was the locusts and the wild honey which those solitudes produced, declares himself to be "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." In later ages, the crafty impostor Mohammed, in order more effectually to establish the pretended sanctity of his character, thought it necessary to shun the society of men, and retired to fabricate his daring impositions in "a lonely cave, amidst the recesses of Mount Hara."

GROVES, sacred to religion and science, were famous over all the east. Abraham is said to have "planted a *grove* in Beersheba, and to have called there upon the name of the Lord."‡

But

* Dr Prideaux, who, next to the learned Hyde, has given the most ample account of Zoroaster and his tenets, informs us, that the word *Zend-avesta* signifies *Fire-kindler* See Prideaux's Connections, vol 1 p 317 oct edit 1724. See also Dr. Hyde, Hist. Vet. Relig Pers. cap. xxvi. p. 330. Edit. Oxon, 1760.

† Prideaux's Connections, vol. 1. p 224.

‡ Gen. xxi. verse 23.

But his degenerate posterity afterwards prostituted the *hallowed grove* to purposes of the basest devotion. They were upbraided, by the prophets, with burning incense and offering oblations, under every oak and green tree, to the gods of the Phœnicians and the neighbouring nations. It was against the *groves*, polluted by such idolatrous sacrifices, that the most awful anathemas of offended heaven were, in holy writ perpetually denounced. Amidst the ardours of a torrid clime, those sylvan solitudes could not fail to afford the most grateful retreat; but, according to the united attestations of the ancients, their inmost recesses were often polluted by the most dreadful rites. The SCYTHIANS, also, who never erected temples to the deity, in their colder regions celebrated the mysteries of their sanguinary superstition under *groves* of oak of astonishing extent and of the profoundest gloom. Some of those oaks, according to Keysler,* who has diligently investigated the antiquities of that northern race, and traced them among their descendants in Europe, were of a prodigious magnitude, and were always plentifully sprinkled with the blood of the expiring victims. However vast the dimensions of those

See Keysler's Antiquitates Septentrionales, Dissert. 3.

oaks might have been, it is hardly poffible they could have exceeded in fize that wonderful Indian tree under which we are told, by the ancients,* that four hundred horfemen might take fhelter at once. This was doubtlefs the facred BATTA, or Banian tree of the moderns, under the ample fhade of whofe radicating branches, Tavernier informs us, that the Hindoos of modern times delight to refide, to drefs their victuals and erect their pagods. Of one of this fpecies, growing near Surat, he has given an engraving,† with a number of FAKEERS, the Gymnofophifts of the ancients, in every dreadful pofture of penance and diftortion. The Druids of Gaul and of Mona, the immediate defcendants of the ancient CELTO-SCYTHIANS, retained the fame veneration for groves of oak, and, according to the Roman hiftorians, in the early periods of that empire, practifed the fame tremendous fpecies of fuperftition, devoting to the Gods, with many horrid ceremonies, the unhappy captives,‡ taken

* Confult Strabo, lib. 15. p 659. & Plin Nat Hift. lib. xii. c. iv. in regard to the immenfe bulk of the Indian trees, efpecially of the FICUS INDICA.

† See the engraving, Voyage de Tavernier, tom iv p 118. edit. à Rouen, 1713, and p 106 of the London folio edit.

‡ *Victima* feems to de derived a *victo*, the perfon conquered in battle, and therefore doomed to facrifice.

taken in war. Lucan,* deſcribing the Maſſilian grove of the former, enumerates circumſtances which make us ſhudder as we read—the gloomy, damp, impenetrable, grove, where no ſylvan deity ever reſided, no bird ever ſang, no beaſt ever ſlumbered, no gentle zephyr ever played, nor even the lightning could rend a paſſage. It was a place of blood and horror, abounding with altars reeking with the gore of human victims, by which all the trunks of the lofty and eternal oaks, which compoſed it, were dyed of a crimſon colour: a black and turbid water rolled through it in many a winding ſtream: no ſoul ever entered the forlorn abode, except the prieſt, who, at noon and at midnight, with paleneſs on his brow and tremor in his ſtep, went thither to celebrate the horrible myſteries in honour of that terrific deity, whoſe aſpect he dreaded more than death to behold.

That

* Lucus erat, longo nunquam violatus ab ævo,
Obſcurum cingens connexis aera ramis.—
Hunc non ruricolæ Panes, nemorumque potentes
Sylvani Nymphæque tenent, ſed barbara ritu
Sacra deum, ſtructæ ſacris feralibus aræ;
Omnis et humanis luſtrata cruoribus arbos.
Illis et volucres metuunt inſiſtere ramis,
Et luſtris recubare feræ: nec ventus in illas
Incubuit ſilvas, excuſſaque nubibus atris
Fulgura . . . . .

Lucan's Pharſalia, lib. 3. 400 *& ſeq.*

That a country, like India, whose JUNGLES, at this period of general cultivation, form in some places an impervious barrier, and whose sages have ever affected both the austerity and seclusion of anchorites, should once have abounded with the noblest groves, calculated for every purpose of superstition as well as instruction, is a supposition neither irrational nor incredible. Indeed many very extensive and beautiful groves* yet remain in Hindostan, though now applied to other purposes. Whatever may have been urged in favour of the high antiquity of BENARES, as the original seat of Hindoo literature and the most favoured residence of the Brahmins, it seems to be a fact, authenticated by the evidence of the Ayeen Akbery,† and corroborated in some degree by the Asiatic Researches,‡ that TIRHOOT, a city situated in the north of Bahar, possesses a prior claim to that honour; for, it is said, "*from old time*, to have been the residence of Hindoo learning;" and those delightful groves of orange-trees mentioned before, which extended no less than thirty cose, might well contribute to render

* In the SACONTALA, an ancient Indian drama, the Brahmins are represented as residing in the bosom of a deep forest.

† Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii p. 32.

‡ Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 163.

render it the Athens of Hindoſtan. It will be remembered, that Birmh-Gaya, a place of worſhip, ſo called from being conſecrated to Brahma, is in that Subah, and that Mr. Chambers, quoting Feriſhta, ſays, that the province of Bahar was thus denominated, " becauſe it was formerly ſo full of Brahmins, as to be, as it were, one great *ſeminary of learning*," as the word imports. NAUGRACUT, ſituated on the range of mountains of the ſame name, in the north of Lahore, is alſo mentioned, by ancient travellers, as having a celebrated college of Hindoo learning, groves of vaſt extent, and a moſt frequented and ſplendid chapel of Hindoo devotion, the very floor of which, according to Mandelſloe,* was covered with plates of gold. The rites, however, were ſomewhat of a ſanguinary kind; for, to gain the ſmile of MATTA, the monſtrous idol adored there, the infatuated devotees cut out their tongues, which, according to Abul Fazel,† miraculouſly grew again in the ſpace of two or three days.

It has, indeed, been aſſerted, and the aſſertion is ſupported by the evidence of tradition, that the very early inhabitants of India were neither ſo gentle in their manners nor ſo guiltleſs

* Mandelſloe apud Harris, vol. ii. p. 120.

† Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 133.

less in their oblations as are the modern, but that they delighted in the effusion of sacrificial blood as much as their progeny abhor and avoid it. It has been asserted, that not only BESTIAL but even HUMAN sacrifices were common among them, and that the vestiges of this sanguinary superstition are still evident in frequent instances of voluntary suicide, and particularly in the inhuman practice, so common throughout India, of women burning themselves with their deceased husbands; a practice, which is still encouraged by the Brahmins, and which all the authority of Mohammedan and European governors cannot effectually check. The truth of this assertion is, indeed, too well authenticated both by ancient and modern writers; and, though Mr. Holwell,* arguing from the general mildness of the Hindoo character, and the benevolent principles of the Brahmin religion, strenuously denies the existence of those bloody rites, yet, unaccountable as it may appear, the VEDAS† themselves enjoin the oblation, on some occasions, of a MAN, a BULL, and a HORSE, under the names of NERAMEDHA, GOMEDHA, and ASWAMEDHA.

* Holwell, part ii. p. 84.

† Asiat. Research. vol. i. p. 265.

WAMEDHA. In the Ayeen Akbery,* it is expressly said, that, at a particular period, on account of the number of animals which were at that time sacrificed in Juggen, (divine worship,) "the Almighty appeared upon earth under a human form, to convince mankind of the wickedness of that custom, and that he lived a hundred years." Strabo,† indeed, and Arrian,‡ unite in affirming, that sacrifices of animals were anciently practised in India, and specify both the bull and the horse, which were obliged to be coal-black, as being of a more rare and valuable kind. The former adds, that the throats of the victims were not cut, for fear of rendering the sacrifice imperfect, by spilling the blood of the animal, but that they were strangled. This mode of depriving the animal of life, if we are at all to credit the account, was more probably adopted to avoid the defilement of that blood, but I can by no means find this particular confirmed either in the Asiatic Researches, which expressly say, these ceremonies *were stained with blood*, nor in that part of the Ayeen Akbery, which records the history of the sacrificial rites of India. The latter book mentions, in opposition to what Strabo asserts concerning the coal-black

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 241.

† Strabo, lib. 15. p. 710.

‡ Arrian in Indicis.

black ſteed, that the ASWAMEDHA JUG, or horſe-ſacrifice, was only properly performed when the animal was white, with a *black right ear*; which, however, being an object equally rare, will ſerve to prove the validity of that valuable author's general information.

However incredible to ſome perſons may appear the aſſertion of the moſt ſanguinary rites having been at one time generally practiſed in Hindoſtan, the exiſtence of ſuch rites is rendered exceedingly probable by the following ſhort chapter in the Ayeen Akbery, which Abul Fazil, who had the beſt opportunities of inveſtigating the fact, would not have inſerted, unleſs founded in truth. It is entitled,* MERITORIOUS kinds of SUICIDE. There are five in number, for the choice of the voluntary victim. "1. Starving. 2. Covering himſelf with cow-dung; ſetting it on fire, and conſuming himſelf therein. 3. Burying himſelf in ſnow; (this practice muſt have been peculiar to the northern regions.) 4. At the extremity of Bengal, where the Ganges diſcharges itſelf into the ſea through a thouſand channels, he goes into the water, enumerates his ſins, and prays till the alligators come and devour him. 5. Cutting his throat at

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 274.

at Allahabad, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna." The legiſlator, who could denominate theſe horrid acts of ſelf-murder *meritorious*, could not be of a very mild or benevolent diſpoſition, but, on the contrary, muſt have been a gloomy bigot or blood-thirſty tyrant. The ſacrifice which CALANUS made of himſelf, on the funeral pile, before the whole aſſembled army of Alexander; the ſimilar devotion of himſelf to the flames, at Athens, of the venerable Brachman, ZARMANOCHAGAS, who attended the embaſſy ſent by Porus to Auguſtus, and whoſe epitaph, dictated by himſelf, expreſsly aſſerted, that he relinquiſhed life in conformity to a cuſtom prevailing among his countrymen; that, mentioned in a former chapter, of the unſucceſsful but warlike ſovereign of Lahore; and the authenticated narratives, in times comparatively modern, of the ſacrifice or inhumation, together with the corpſe of the monarch, of the principal ſlaves and moſt beloved women* of the ſovereigns of the peninſula: theſe collective conſiderations in-

con-

* Mention is made, in Harris's Voyages, (vol. i. p. 282,) of the death of a king of Tanjore, at whoſe funeral no leſs than three hundred of his concubines at once leaped into the flames. Texeira, in page 9, of his Perſian Hiſtory, declares, that, when he was in India, "four hundred women burned themſelves at the funeral of the Naique of Madura."

conteſtably prove how much accuſtomed the Indians formerly were to the rites of human ſacrifice, and in how late periods they continued to practiſe that enormity, either conſtrained in regard to others, or voluntary in reſpect to themſelves. The dreadful rite, as a public national ſacrifice, ceaſed, we are told,* when the ninth great incarnation of VEESHNU, in the form of the God BOODH, abovementioned, took place, about 1000 years before Chriſt, when that benign and compaſſionate deity aboliſhed the diſgraceful cuſtom, and ordained, in its place, the more ſimple and innocent oblation of fruits, flowers, and incenſe.

I am inclined to believe, that both this practice and the barbarous cuſtom of devoting to death the affectionate wiſe on the funeral pile of her deceaſed huſband, (doctrines ſo oppoſite to the general precepts of Brahma, which cheriſhed in the boſoms of his votaries the moſt enlarged benevolence, and extended that benevolence even to brutes,) derived its origin from ſome early but forgotten connection with the neighbouring ferocious and war-trained tribes of SCYTHIA. I have ventured to differ from Major Rennell, in deriving the national appellation of Cathæi, which the Greeks, doubtleſs from ſome reſembling ſound heard

* Aſiat. Reſearch. vol. i. p. 265.

by them, gave to the moſt warlike people of northern India, from Kathay, or, if written Cuthæi, from Scuthe, or Scythe; whereas that gentleman, finding the name written Katheri in Diodorus Siculus, with perhaps greater propriety, would underſtand by them the Kattry, or Raja-pout tribe, and quotes a paſſage from Thevenot in corroboration of the idea. However, his own conjecture, that the tribe of NOMURDY, inhabiting the banks of the Indus, may probably be the deſcendants of the SCYTHIAN NOMADES, and a relation which I find in Abulgazi's Hiſtory* of the Tartars, concerning a very ancient conqueſt of the northern regions of Hindoſtan by OGUS CAWN, one of their moſt early emperors, an account of which will be hereafter given in its proper place, induces me ſtill, with every proper diffidence, to adhere to that opinion. But there anciently exiſted a race of people, who bordered ſtill nearer to the northern frontiers of India, and whoſe manners and habits, Herodotus † acquaint us, greatly reſembled thoſe of the Scythians, I mean the MASSAGETÆ, inhabiting, according to Sir W. Jones,‡ the territory by the moderns called BADAKSHAN, from whoſe primitive practices, how-

* See Abulgazi's Hiſt. of the Tart. vol i. p. 17.

† Herodotus, lib. 1. p. 99. edit. Stephani, 1592, which is the edition quoted throughout this work.

‡ Deſcription of Aſia, p. 21. prefixed to Nadir Shah.

ever now altogether relinquiſhed, the Indians might have borrowed their leſs humane principles and cuſtoms. I conſider the GETES, upon whom Timur is ſaid to have made war, as the direct deſcendants of this ancient tribe, and am induced to do ſo by Sheriffedin's deſcription of them, as a warlike race of Mountaineers *. Theſe GETES, Major Rennell, † if I miſtake not his meaning, ſuppoſes to be the ſame people with the modern JAUTS, who, at this day, make ſo conſpicuous a figure in Hindoſtan. It is not from attachment to ſyſtem, but from a wiſh to vindicate the mild and benevolent progeny of Hindoſtan from the inconſiſtency of a conduct, ſo entirely repugnant to their genius, and to the general ſentiments and practice at this day prevailing throughout the country, except among the war-tribe only, that I have ſo far preſſed this argument, in the hope of inducing a perſuaſion that ſo nefarious a practice might *poſſibly* not have originated among them, but was a dreadful exotic, imported during their connection with their neighbours of the more barbarous north. The ſanguinary uſage might have been univerſally adopted only in times prior to the inſtitution of their firſt great legiſlator, whoſoever, in reality, that legiſlator might have

* Life of Timur Bec, vol. ii. p. 46.

† Major Rennell's Memoir, p. 119, ſecond edition.

have been. If, however, we allow, what, after all, I fear must be allowed, that it was prescribed by BRAHMA* himself; to avoid absurdity, we must suppose, that, to prevent too violent a shock being given to religious prejudices so deeply rooted, or not venturing to run the risque of abolishing at once a custom so generally practised, he permitted it only on some particular emergencies; but, in general, and probably with a view to remove for ever the baneful impression from their minds, throughout his whole voluminous code,* inculcated the most beneficent affection to *their fellow-creatures*; and, to prevent the effusion of bestial blood, which we know was so prodigally shed by the most ancient nations, established the humane but fanciful, and since corrupted, doctrine of the Metempsychosis.

The SCYTHIANS, however, were not their only neighbours who were, in a notorious degree, guilty of the enormity of human sacrifices. If Herodotus may be credited, (and, concerning these remote periods of the world, even Herodotus, the most respectable historian of antiquity, or rather the venerable father of all history, may be sometimes fallible,) the ancient PERSIANS† sacrificed human vic-

 tims;

* The four VEDAS together compose eleven folio volumes, which are now in the possession of Colonel Polier, who was for many years resident at the court of DELHI.

† Herodoti lib. vii.

tims; and, in particular, he informs us, that, in the expedition of Xerxes into Greece, arriving at a place in the country of the Edonians, called the Nine Ways, the Magi took *nine* of the sons and daughters of the inhabitants, and *buried them alive*; * for, he adds, to these rites of inhumation the Persians are accustomed. To corroborate the truth of a circumstance, which he suspected might not be credited by his readers, he, in the very next sentence, acquaints us, he had heard, that, when Amestris, wife of Xerxes, had happily attained to mature age, with confirmed health, she ordered fourteen children of the noblest families of Persia to *be buried alive*, in grateful sacrifice to the subterraneous deity † This practice, however, was equally contrary to the precepts of Zoroaster as to the general tenor of the VEDAS. How shall we account for its introduction into those nations, or indeed of so horrid a rite into any nation? For, in fact, all the most ancient nations of the earth practised it, the Phœnicians, the Chaldæans, the Egyptians, and, it is too probable, the Jews themselves, who were forbidden, by the most dreadful penalties, to cause their sons and their daughters, like the Chaldæans, to pass through the fire to Moloch, the

* Ζώοντας κατωρυσσον.

† Plutarch confirms the same fact; but, instead of fourteen, says Amestris offered up the hallowed number of nine victims to Pluto.

the Phœnician deity. The abomination descended from CAIN, *the first murderer*, to all his posterity; and we must consider the command of Jehovah to Abraham, first to sacrifice his only son, and then, by the voice of an angel from heaven, ordering him to forbear and to sacrifice a RAM in his place, as a strong decisive mark of his disapprobation, and as an express prohibition of the continuance among men of so nefarious and detestable a practice.

The ASWAMEDHA JUG, or horse-sacrifice, the Indians, doubtless, derived from the Persians, among whom, according to the whole stream of classic antiquity, the *horse* was in a peculiar manner sacred to the sun. In their pompous sacrifices to that deity, a radiant car, glittering with gold and diamonds, and drawn by *white horses*, in imitation of those ætherial coursers, which they imagined rapidly conveyed the orb of day in its progress through the expanse of heaven, constantly formed a part of the procession. It was preceded by a train of led horses, sumptuously arrayed, and of uncommon beauty and magnitude, who were the destined victims of that splendid superstition. The Massagetæ, too, that warlike race, who, according to Strabo, * opposed the arms of the great Cyrus, adored the SUN, and sacrificed

 horses

* Strabo, lib. 11, p. 487. edit. Basil. The edition referred to throughout.

horſes to that deity. Horſes, however, were not only ſacrificed to the ſun in the ancient æras of the Perſian empire; for, the Perſians (who, according to the more authentic repreſentation of Dr. Hyde, venerated all the elements of nature) paid likewiſe a religious homage to water; and Herodotus, in the page cited before, ſays, that, on the arrival of the army at the Strymon, the Magi ſacrificed nine *white horſes* to that river, into which they threw them, with a quantity of rich aromatics. I may in this place remark, that, as there ſeems to be the moſt ſolid ground for ſuppoſing that the Indians owe to their early connection with Perſia their profound reverence for fire, ſo it is not improbable that their veneration for great rivers, as, for inſtance, the Ganges and the Kiſtnah,* whoſe ſtreams they account ſacred, may be derived from the ſame fruitful ſource. I was not able to oblige my readers with any very particular account of the Neramedha, or human ſacrifice, as anciently practiſed in India; (though I ſhall hereafter give an inſtance of one from the HEETOPADES;) but, on that at preſent under conſideration, ſome rays of light have been thrown in a tranſlation by Mr. Halhed from an old Perſian author, who publiſhed in that language

* I particularly mention theſe rivers, becauſe two of the moſt conſiderable, but the Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 254, enumerates no leſs than twenty-eight rivers, which are held ſacred by the Hindoos.

language a Hindoo commentary upon the Vedas, in which this rite, as a ſymbol, is explained. The whole account is wild and romantic in the extreme, and Mr. Halhed does not abſolutely vouch for its authenticity; however, till more genuine ſources of information are opened to us, we muſt make the moſt of thoſe in our poſſeſſion. The Aſwamedha Jug, we are told in that book, does not merely conſiſt in bringing a horſe and ſacrificing him, but the rite is alſo to be taken in a myſtic ſignification. "The horſe, ſo ſacrificed, is in the place of the ſacrificer, bears his ſins with him into the wilderneſs into which he is turned adrift, (for, from this particular inſtance, it ſeems that the ſacrificing knife was not always employed,) and becomes the expiatory victim of thoſe ſins." Mr. Halhed obſerves,* that this ceremony reminds us of the ſcape-goat of the children of Iſrael; and, indeed, it is not the only one in which a particular co-incidence between the Hindoo and Moſaic ſyſtems of theology may be traced.

The Ayeen Akbery informs us that the Aſwamedha Jug is performed only by great monarchs previous to their entering upon a war; that he then carries victory wherever he goes; and that whoſoever has performed this ceremony a hundred times will become a monarch in

* See the Preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 9.

the upper regions. Mr. Wilkins,* comment-ing upon a paſſage, alluſive to this ſacrifice, in the HEETOPADES, differs from Abul Fazil; for, he ſays that the ſacrifice of the horſe was, in ancient times, performed by a king at the con-cluſion of a great war in which he had been victorious.

The GOMEDHA JUG, or ſacrifice of the bull, they might probably derive from the ſame quar-ter; ſince we are told by Xenophon, that the bull in Perſia was likewiſe ſacred to the ſun. This ſpecies of ſacrifice, however, cannot be eaſily reconciled with their preſent enthuſiaſtic and ge-neral attachment to that claſs of animals; ſo general and ſo enthuſiaſtic, that, throughout In-dia, to kill one of thoſe ſacred animals, is a crime that can only be expiated by the inſtant death of the offender. There is a beautiful engraving taken from an ancient ſculpture in marble, and inſerted in the curious and valuable collection of Montfaucon,† which is ſo highly illuſtra-tive of the Gomedha ſacrifice, that I cannot refrain from preſenting the reader with a ſhort deſcription of a part of it, as well as of ano-ther or two, in Dr Hyde's very learned work on the Religion of the Ancient Perſians, which will

* Advert to notes on the HEETOPADES, p. 331.

† See Montfaucon, l'Antiquité expliquée, tome i. p. 373, edit. Paris, 1719. See alſo a ſimilar ſculpture, engraved in Dr. Hyde's firſt plate, with other curious aſtronomical appen-dages, which will be noticed hereafter.

will ſtill more immediately elucidate the preſent obſcure ſubject. The reader, who may not have read Dr. Hyde's book, nor be acquainted with the profound and ſtupendous myſteries of the ancient worſhip of MITHRA, concerning which I ſhall have occaſion to treat ſo largely hereafter, will, perhaps, be aſtoniſhed to hear that the Perſians, who were of all nations the moſt addicted to this ſpecies of ſuperſtition, choſe to perform their adorations to that deity in deep caverns and gloomy receſſes. The deeper thoſe caverns, the more gloomy thoſe receſſes, to a ſublimer point of elevation mounted the zeal of their devotion, and more fervently glowed the never-dying flame of the ſacrifice. One reaſon for adopting a conduct, ſo apparently incongruous, ſeems to be, that all the myſteries of religion, celebrated in the ancient world, were performed, as I have expreſſed myſelf in another part of this diſſertation, εν σκοτω και νυκτι, in the boſom of darkneſs and in the dead ſilence of the night. Another reaſon for performing this worſhip in caves is given by Lactantius, who, after affirming that the Perſians were the firſt people who worſhipped the ſun in dens and caves, adds that they did ſo *to denote the eclipſes of that luminary*.* Around theſe caverns, as will be more extenſively explained hereafter, when I come to deſcribe the myſterious rites,

rites, probably celebrated in Salſette and Elephanta, were arranged various ſymbols of the SUN and planetary train, with ſculptures of the animals that compoſed the ſigns of the zodiac, engraved on the lofty walls, and decorating the emboſſed roof. In this artificial planiſphere conſpicuouſly was portrayed the conſtellation of TAURUS, or the bull, and the bas-relief, of which the above-mentioned antiquary has given an engraving, repreſents a perſon in the full vigour of youth, adorned with a kind of tiara, ſuch as were worn by the Mithratic prieſts in the ſacrifices, and with a looſe tunic floating in the air, preſſing to the ground with his knee a ſtruggling BULL, extended beneath him, and, while he holds him muzzled with the left hand, with his right he is in the act of plunging a dagger into his throat. But why, exclaims the Abbé Banier,* whom Warburton (for once juſt to merit) calls the beſt interpreter of the mythology of the ancients, why is MITHRA, under the figure of an active robuſt young man, repreſented in the attitude of ſlaying a BULL, as he appears on all the monuments of the ancients? In the Abbé's opinion it is a forcible figurative emblem of the renovated warmth and vigour of the SUN, who, having paſſed without heat and ſtrength the cold wintry

* See Banier's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 104.

wintry ſigns, when the ſpring approaches, and he enters into TAURUS, one of the vernal ſigns, *ſhines forth in a highly increaſed degree of* ſtrength and ſplendor, ſhadowed out under the emblem of cutting the throat of the BULL, one of the ſtrongeſt and fierceſt of animals. The Abbé contends,* that this ſymbolical ſculpture is not a repreſentation of a ſacrifice to the SUN, but only intended as an image of his power in that ſign. As, however, in nearly all the bas-reliefs relative to this worſhip, a ſimilar figure of a young man cutting the throat of a BULL invariably occurs, it moſt probably is alluſive to that ſacrifice: or, ſhall we ſay, that what the Perſians beheld thus ſtrikingly portrayed upou the moſt ancient zodiac in hieroglyphic characters, invented probably by the fathers of mankind to repreſent the power and influence of the SUN in TAURUS, was, in ſucceeding ages, realized by ſervile and infatuated ſuperſtition, and the *ſlaughtered bull* was thenceforth eſteemed a grateful ſacrifice to the SUN, when they hailed his return to the vernal conſtellations, and invoked

——————— PERSEI ſub rupibus ANTRI,
Indignata ſequi torquentem cornua MITHRAM.†

The general meaning of Statius, with the reader's permiſſion, I ſhall venture to give in the following paraphraſe.

In

* Banier's Mythology, vol. ii. p. 104.
† Statii Thebais, lib. i.

In Persia's hallow'd caves, the LORD OF DAY
Pours through the central gloom his fervid ray;
High wrought in burnish'd gold the zodiac shines,
And MITHRA toils through all the blazing signs.
See, rising pale from winter's drear domain,
The radiant youth resumes his vernal reign:
With sinewy arm reluctant TAURUS tames,
Beams with new grace, and darts severer flames.

Although I profess to give the description only of the principal figure in this sculpture, yet it ought by no means to be omitted, that, on the right side of this monument, stand two youths, with similar habits and tiaras, holding each a torch; the one raised aloft and blazing in full splendor; the other, with the lighted end, directed downwards to the earth, and faintly glimmering. These expressive figures, as seems to be universally agreed among antiquaries, represent, the former the *rising*, the latter the *setting*, SUN; though, since it was the object of the sculptor to portray Mithra in his full splendor only, I should conceive they were rather intended for symbols of the *morning* and the *evening* star.

There is another forcible reason that inclines me to think this action of cutting the throat of the bull allusive to a real sacrifice, which is, that, in one of the other bas-reliefs, I mean that of the VILLA-BORGHESA, (and all of these antique sculptures, dug up in Italy, are, doubtless, only imitations of those found in Persia and Media by the Romans who originally

nally

nally introduced into Italy the myſterious rites of Mithra,) upon the thigh of the ſlaughtered animal there is this inſcription, SOLI DEO INVICTO MITHRÆ; which ſeems indiſputably to allude to the circumſtance of the oblation. As to the other inſcription, NAMA SABASIO, which appears upon the neck of the animal, juſt above the part into which the dagger is plunged, and which, the Abbé ſays, has perplexed all the antiquaries; the meaning will appear very evident, when we conſider that NAMA may poſſibly be an appellative, and that Sir William Jones has informed us that SABA means *the hoſt of heaven.*

In the celebrated work of Hyde there are two other plates, peculiarly illuſtrative of the rites and ſymbols of the Mithratic religion. The former, facing page 111, exhibits, in as many different compartments, no leſs than four ſtriking emblematical portraits of Mithra, and the bull ſacred to him; but the one, which I wiſh particularly to point out to the readers notice, is that in which an elevated figure, decorated with a high tiara, ſtands erect upon the ſame animal, with one foot placed upon his head and the other centered upon his back: his right hand graſps a *dagger*, his left ſupports a *globe*.* Theſe ſymbols diſplay, at once, the power of the God, and the extent of

* Vide Hyde, de Religione veterum Perſarum, p. 111 and 113, edit Oxon, 1760, ubi etiam ſupra.

of that power. The poſition of his feet on the head and back of the bull, and the perpetual recurrence of that animal itſelf in the attitude of proſtration upon all theſe bas-reliefs, plainly manifeſt, that the bull was not leſs than the horſe ſacred to the SUN in Perſia, and from what ſource the GOMEDHA JUG of India, in all probability, originated. On either ſide of this figure, likewiſe, are ſeen the youths with their torches, who repreſent the *morning* and the *evening* ſtar, but with this difference, that, whereas both are in the former table ſtanding, in the latter table, the figure, with the uplifted flaming torch, is alone in a ſtanding poſture, while the figure, with the torch juſt ready to be extinguiſhed, is beautifully repreſented ſitting in a melancholy attitude, as if overwhelmed with anguiſh for the loſs of his expiring light, and that the world was going to be wrapped in nocturnal clouds and incumbent darkneſs. In the ſecond plate of the ſame book, there is an engraving of Taurus geſtans Solem, that is, of the SUN riſing on the back of the BULL, which, Hyde informs us, is a device very common on the coins of the MOGUL EMPERORS OF INDIA. The reader will perhaps be pleaſed to ſee his words at length; Sic nempe pinguntur ſigna: adeo ut in dicto iconiſmo exhibeatur SOL in ſigno TAURI, Perſarum more deſignatus. Sicetiam in nummis MAGNI MOGUL IMPERATORIS INDIÆ exhibitur corpus ſolare ſuper dorſo tau-

ri, aut leonis, qui illud eodum modo geſtat. Nam ſol videtur portari et circumduci ſuper 12 zodiacalia ſymbola, dum ſingula dodecatemoria percurrit. But, to return to the ſubject of the ancient ſanguinary ſacrifices in India, of which, however unaccountable, this of the bull was one, though in the preſent age forbidden. They conſtitute a feature of national character, ſo directly oppoſite to that of the modern Indians, who, according to Mr Orme, the trueſt delineator of that character, *ſhudder at the very ſight of blood*, who are totally ignorant of one great branch of medical ſcience, becauſe *anatomical diſſections* are repugnant to their religion, and who, in the opinion of the ſame writer, are at this day the moſt puſillanimous and enervated inhabitants of the globe;* that on this review it is impoſſible to refrain from a high degree of aſtoniſhment; and, ſince the ſubject is equally curious and profound, it is my intention not to paſs it ſlightly over, but to give it a diſcuſſion in ſome degree proportionate to its importance. The object then of our enquiry is, of what nature and origin were the vindictive deities, whoſe implacable fury exacted, from the benignant Hindoo, rites from which his nature ſeems to have been ſo abhorrent? Let us explore the latent ſources of this wonderful and complicated ſuperſtition.

From the earlieſt periods of time, among all idolatrous nations of antiquity, a conſtant and

uniform

uniform belief prevailed of the agency of intellectual beings in the government of the world. They ſuppoſed the whole compaſs of creation to be animated with thoſe imaginary beings, aſſigning to ſome an elevated ſtation in the celeſtial orbs; to others a reſidence in the elements of nature, while others again had more particularly in charge the management of this terreſtrial globe, and ſuperintended the concerns of mortals. But as they imagined there were good ſpirits, or αγαθοδαιμονες, whoſe office was of this protecting and benevolent kind, ſo they alſo believed in the exiſtence of beings of a very contrary nature and diſpoſition, or κακοδαιμονες, whoſe conſtant employment and whoſe infernal delight it was to derange the beautiful order and harmony of nature, and to ſpread deſolation through the works of God. I ſay *the works of God*, becauſe there hardly ever exiſted a nation, notwithſtanding the repreſentation of Sanchoniatho, and other writers of that claſs, who did not believe in one grand original preſiding Deity, but whom they ſuppoſed to be infinitely removed from the material univerſe which he had formed, and to govern that univerſe by celeſtial agents. The Indians, in particular, are to this day of opinion that the ſupreme felicity of the Deity conſiſts in a ſtate of divine abſorption in the contemplation of his own wonderful perfections; but ſtill they imagine that his ſpirit intimately

pervade-

pervades every part of the creation. These good and evil Genii, or, as they are called in the language of Hindostan, the Deos, or Dewtahs, are represented as eternally contending together; and the incessant conflicts, that existed between them, filled creation with uproar, and all its subordinate classes with dismay. The ancient Persians, according to Dr. Hyde,* affirmed, that there were two mighty predominant principles in nature; the first they denominated Ormuzd, or Oromasdes, the superior and benevolent being; the second they styled Ahriman, or the inferior and malignant Being. Mithra seems to have been the middle and mediatorial character, the ostensible agent of the eternal beneficence, and, in the oracles of Zoroaster, is called the second mind. Oromasdes is represented as reigning from all eternity; Mithra is described as a being formed of a nature and with powers only not infinite, Ahriman existed by sufferance only from the Supreme, during that period, and for those purposes which his mind had resolved on. While the good spirits, appointed by Oromasdes, under the direction of Mithra, to superintend the affairs of the universe, were employed in acts of perpetual kindness and guardian love to mankind, the agents of Ahriman endeavoured, by every pos-

 sible

* Hist. Relig. vet. Pers. c. ix. p. 160. edit Oxon. 1760.

ſible means, to thwart their benign intentions, and plotted the moſt baneful ſchemes for their moleſtation and ruin. Correſpondent to the vaſt powers which they poſſeſſed were the tremendous conflicts in which they engaged. All nature was convulſed by the violence and continuance of thoſe conflicts, and the terrified human race reſigned themſelves to the impulſes of that ſuperſtitious dread and horror, with which they were overwhelmed.

If the Perſian and the Hindoo legiſlator were not in reality the ſame perſon, which I ſtrongly ſuſpect they were, under two diſtinct appellations, it muſt be owned that the principles of their theology are wonderfully ſimilar. BRAHME, THE GREAT ONE, is the ſupreme eternal uncreated God of the Hindoos. BRAHMA, the firſt created Being, by whom he made and governs the world, is the prince of the beneficent ſpirits. He is aſſiſted by VEESHNU, the great PRESERVER of men, who has nine ſeveral times appeared upon earth, and under a human form, for the moſt amiable and beneficent purpoſes. Veeſhnu is often called CREESHNA, the Indian Apollo, and in character greatly reſembles the MITHRA of Perſia; the prince of the benevolent Dewtah has a ſecond coadjutor in MAHADEO, or the DESTROYING POWER OF GOD; and theſe three celeſtial beings, or, to ſpeak more correctly, this threefold divinity, armed with the terrors of Almighty power,

purſue

purſue, throughout the extent of creation, the rebellious Dewtahs, headed by MAHASOOR,* the GREAT MALIGNANT SPIRIT who ſeduced them, and dart upon their flying bands the AGNYASTRA,† or fiery ſhafts of divine vengeance.

The policy of legiſlators, and the deſpotiſm of princes, have never obtained a ſurer hold of the mind of man, or ſecured his obedience more firmly, than when they have employed for that purpoſe the fetters of ſuperſtition. To minds, ſo deeply impreſſed with an idea of the agency of inviſible beings as were thoſe of the Perſians and the Indians, few legal terrors were wanted to enforce the moſt abject ſubmiſſion to the mandates of their governors. Hence the rigid adherence of the PERSEES, that exiled and perſecuted ſect, to their ancient rites, and hence that inviolable fidelity to their tenets which diſtinguiſhes the undeviating INDIANS. On this account it was, that Darius Hyſtaſpes ſo ardently eſpouſed the cauſe and principles of Zoroaſter, that at his death he ordered himſelf to be enrolled the Archimagus, or Chief of the Magi; and from this cauſe, probably, it has ariſen that the Rajahs of India have ever ſubmitted, without a murmur, to the aſſumed

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* Mr. Holwell, whom I, in part, follow here, writes this word MOISASOR; but I have taken the liberty to alter it, according to Mr. Wilkins's orthography in the Geeta, to MAHASOOR, that is, the great Aſoor, or evil ſpirit.

† Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i, p. 264.

consequence and arrogated superiority of the priests of BRAHMA.

The more timid Indian multiplied, without number, the gods of his disturbed imagination. The lightning that blasted the grove or shivered the cavern in which he performed his devotion, the furious tempest that battered to pieces his cany habitation, and, at the period of the MONSOONS, ravaged the shores of the peninsula, appeared to him as if directed by the invisible hand of some enraged Dæmon. If the fields, scorched by the beam of a direct sun, and, sterile from a defect in the annual inundations, denied their accustomed produce of rice, his innocent and only food; if the TANK, that abundant source of health and felicity, which rolled through his garden a thousand fertilizing streams, and which was so necessary to himself in the performance of a thousand pious ablutions, denied the necessary tribute of its water, FAMINE was, by his fears, magnified into a Dæmon of haggard look and gigantic form, and the affrighted bigot resorted to what he supposed to be the surest means of propitiation. On these emergencies, whether of national distress or of domestic calamity, he hastened, like the Persian, to that SACRED FIRE, which he, with equal zeal, preserved from extinction; he performed, with trembling, the various prescribed ceremonies of the POOJA;* and,

* POOJA signifies *worship*; see the various kinds of POOJA described in the Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 226.

and, while his heart glowed with gratitude for favours received from the protecting Dewtah, he neglected not to deprecate the vengeance of the malignant Dæmon by oblations suited to the ferocity of his character. Agonizing under the torments of superstitious terror, his blood stagnant with holy horror at the recollection of the past or the dread of the future, he thought no offering too costly, no victim too precious. As the stern injunction of the Deity was explained by the barbarous priest, the child of his affection or the wife of his bosom alternately expired on altars reeking with human sacrifice. Hence, in the SACONTALA,* the epithet of blood-thirsty is frequently applied to the evil Dæmon. If the offender happened to be of elevated rank or of distinguished fortune, the penalty of life was sometimes remitted, and the Brahmin pronounced that the divinity might be appeased by a less barbarous oblation. In that case, the half of his possessions was brought to the foot of the altar, and the treasures, thus extorted, were devoted to swell the immense revenues of the temple, and to gratify the insatiable avarice of the priest. It is affirmed, in the HEETOPADES,† that, "without the Brahmins rites, a sacrifice is smitten;" that is, with a curse.

Proportionate to the boon which he wished to obtain, or to the evil which he laboured

to

* Sacontala, pages 82 & 83. † Heetopades, p 11.

to avert, was the largeſs the ſacrificer beſtowed. No leſs than ſixteen various kinds of ſacrifice, all of gold and precious ſtones, each riſing above the other in value, are enumerated in the Ayeen Akbery.* Some of the articles thus enumerated are exceedingly curious, and among them are "the amount of the ſacrificer's own weight, againſt gold, ſilver, &c. golden horſes, golden cows, trees and vines of gold, ploughs of gold, chariots drawn by horſes, and elephants all of gold." The value of theſe offerings varies from 10 to 6660 tolahs. The tolah, we are informed by Tavernier,† a merchant in gold and jewels, is a weight peculiarly appropriated, throughout the Mogul empire, to thoſe precious commodities, and, according to that author, a hundred tolahs amount to thirty-eight ounces. Theſe were probably, in time, ſubſtituted in the place of ſanguinary oblations, and, from their vaſt amount, ſeem to carry evident proof that India was formerly much more abundant in wealth than in periods leſs recent. Indeed the hiſtorians of Mahmud Gaznavi ſtrongly countenance this idea, ſince they are quite extravagant in their account of the wealth found by him in that country. One of them, quoted by Mr. Orme,‡ aſſerts that he found a tree growing out of the earth to an enormous ſize,

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. 229. † Indian Travels, lib. i. c. 2.
‡ Orme's Indoſtan, vol. i. p. 9, firſt edition.

ſize, of which the ſubſtance was pure gold, and this the effect of nature: thus realizing Milton's fable* of 'ambroſial fruits and vegetable gold.' Their offerings of a leſs ſplendid and oſtentatious kind are innumerable; conſiſting, for the moſt part, of rice, flowers, fruits, ſweet-meats, cuſa graſs, cow's milk, and clarified butter. In the Sacontala, † Eendra is more than once denominated "the god with a hundred ſacrifices."

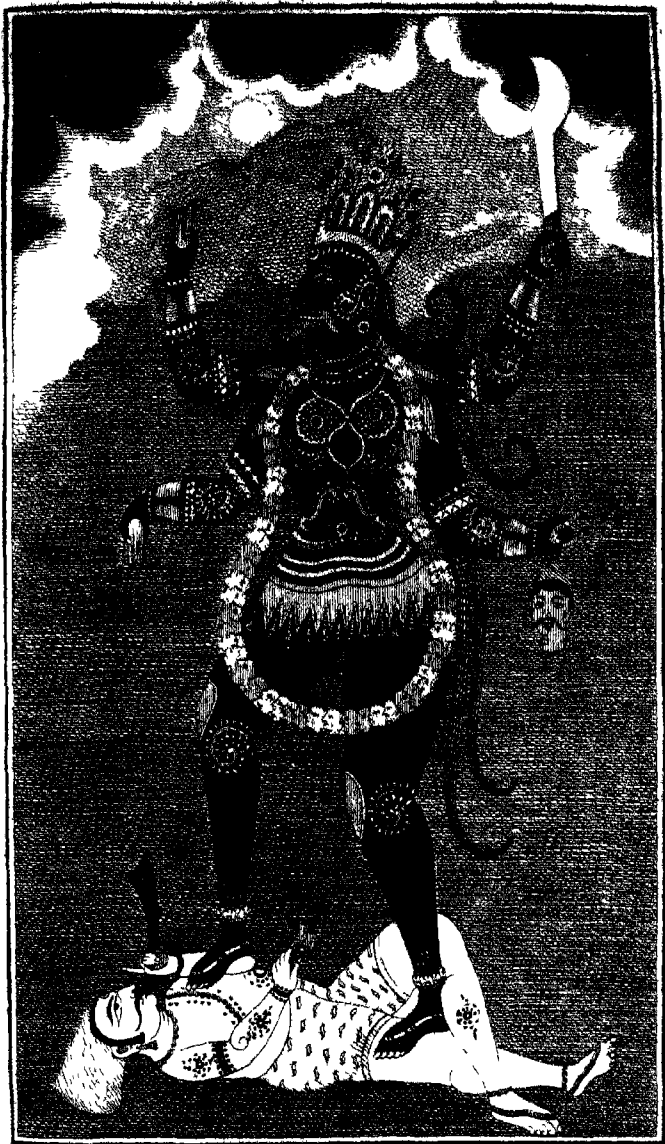
I have both heard and read ſo many attempts to *confute* and even to *ridicule* the aſſertion here made, that the altars of India were once STAINED WITH HUMAN BLOOD, that I could wiſh to place the diſputed ſubject beyond the poſſibility of future controverſy. No fact can be more certainly demonſtrated, if we allow the two beſt Sanſcreet ſcholars of Europe, Sir W. Jones and Mr. Wilkins, to be adequate authorities for determining the queſtion. The name of the black goddeſs, to whom theſe human ſacrifices were offered, was NAREDA, or CALLEE, who is exhibited, in the Indian temples ſacred to her worſhip, with a collar, not compoſed, like that of the benign deities, of a ſplendid aſſemblage of the richeſt gems, but of GOLDEN SKULLS, deſcriptive of the dreadful rites in which ſhe took ſo gloomy a delight. "To her," ſays Sir W. Jones, "human

* Paradiſe Loſt.   † Sacontala, p. 82.

man sacrifices were anciently offered as the VEDAS enjoined, but, in the present age, they are absolutely prohibited, as are also the sacrifices of bulls and horses." This observation is accompanied with an engraving of Nareda, in the Asiatic Researches,* sufficiently savage and picturesque. Both the text of the Heetopades,† and Mr. Wilkins's explanatory notes, decidedly corroborate this assertion. "That most beautiful if not most ancient collection of apologues in the world" records, under the veil of a fable, an instance of a father's sacrificing his son, to avert a dreadful calamity with which the kingdom of India was threatened by the intended flight of its guardian genius. The cruel goddess had informed him, that the offering up of that son, to the Power who presides over nature, should secure the prosperity of the reigning king, and the salvation of the empire. The father relates to his son the dreadful tidings, who chearfully consents to be sacrificed for the preservation of a great kingdom and its monarch. They approach the altar, and, when they have worshipped the image, "O goddess!" exclaims the sacrificer, "let SOOBHRAKA, our sovereign, be prosperous! and let this victim be accepted! Saying this, he cut off his son's head." The god-

* Asiat Research. I. 265.

† Heetopades, p. 212. and note 292.

Barlow sculp

CALLEE, or the BLACK GODDESS to whom HUMAN SACRIFICES were anciently offered in Hindostan

goddefs to whom this offering was made, we are informed by Mr. Wilkins[a], "was Callee, (a name derived from Cala, Time) and it was to her that human facrifices were wont to be offered to avert any threatened evil." In another fable[b], a female obferves; "My hufband, if he chooses, *can fell me to the gods*, or give me to the Bramins," which the tranflator interprets, as referring to the "Naramedha, or human facrifice, not uncommon in the earlier ages." This angry deity is now propitiated by a facrifice of kids and young buffaloes; fo that at this day the veftige of blood remains.

It has been before remarked, that Mr. Holwell ftrenuoufly denies the exiftence of thefe bloody rites in India; whereas, in fact, his whole relation, in regard to this fable perfonage, tends in the ftrongeft manner to eftablifh our belief of the general prevalence of thefe rites in very remote æras. He tells us, that an ancient Pagoda, dedicated to this terrible divinity, ftands about three miles fouth of Calcutta, clofe to a fmall brook, which the Bramins believe to have been the original courfe of the Ganges; that, from her name of Callee, the place itfelf is called Callee Ghat; that her *faft* falls on the laft day of the moon in September, and that fhe is worfhipped *all*

[a] Heetopades, p. 212 and note 292. [b] Ibid. p. 185, note 249.

the night of that day universally; but more particularly at Callee Ghat above mentioned; that different parts of this Gentoogoddess are adored in different places of Hindostan, her eyes at Callee Ghat, her head at Benares, her hand at Bindoobund, &c. that she takes her name from her usual habiliment, which is *black*, and is frequently called the BLACK GODDESS, Callee being the common name for *ink*[a]. On this *fast* also, he observes, worship and offerings are paid to the *manes* of *deceased ancestors*. The origin of this singular deity is perfectly in unison with her life and history. Arrayed in compleat armour she sprang from the eye of the dreadful war-bred goddess Durga, the vanquisher of dœmons and giants at the very instant that she was sinking under their united assault; when Callee, joining her extraordinary powers to those of her parent, they renew the combat, and rout their foes with great and undistinguished slaughter. I cannot refrain from adding in this place, in corroboration of a former remark that, according to Herodotus, the principal and favourite deity of the Scythians was a war divinity, to whom that historian gives the appellation of Mars. To this deity they erected, in every precinct, a vast quadrangular altar

[a] See Holwell, part II. p. 131. and the engraving of Callee, which cannot fail of exciting disgust and horror in the reader.

altar, ſo vaſt as to cover three ſtades of land conſiſting of an immenſe pile of wood collected into bundles; and upon the top of this altar, they placed a ruſty ſcimeter of iron, deeply crimſoned with the blood of the victims, as an emblem of their ſavage divinity, and of their no leſs ſavage rites*. Callee, we ſee, was born in *battle*, and from her birth inured to ſcenes of *carnage* and *death*; and it is deſerving of notice that the youth, ſaid to have been ſacrificed by his father in the fable of the Heetopades, juſt cited, was of the Katteri, or war-tribe, and makes uſe of this remarkable expreſſion "that it was a ſaying which particularly belonged to that tribe, that on ſome diſtinguiſhed occaſions, human ſacrifices were proper."

The ancients indeed ſeldom ſacrificed men, except at ſome grand and awful criſis, when a nation was convulſed by the violence of earthquakes, or deſolated by the rage of peſtilence; in ſeaſons of gloomy deſpondency, or in the exulting moment of ſucceſs and triumph. The deeper the diſtreſs, or the brighter the triumph, the more diſtinguiſhed, by birth and accompliſhments, were obliged to be the objects ſelected for ſacrifice. Neither the tendereſt youth, nor the lovelieſt beauty was ſpared; the prieſt ſometimes expired by the wound of the immolating knife, and kings themſelves were ſacrificed for the welfare

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* Herodoti, Lib. p. 4. 276.

of their ſubjects. It muſt ſtill, however, be owned that the altars of Diana in the Tauric Scythia; and in Egypt, the more gloomy altars of Buſiris, (*triſteſque Buſiridis aræ*) and ſome others in the ancient world, were proverbially infamous for the profuſion of human blood by which they were contaminated. The mode of devoting to death the miſerable victims was various. Some of them were ſtrangled, and ſo immediately put out of their torture: others had the ſkull ſhattered by the violent blow of a mallet from the muſcular arm of the prieſt: others were ſtretched on the back, and had the breaſt laid bare by the ſtroke of a ſabre, while the unfeeling VATES ſtood round, watching the tremulous motion of the convulſed limbs, and drawing cruel preſages from the ſtreaming of the vital fluid. The moſt dreadful and diſguſting of all, was that adopted by the Scythians, and deſcribed perhaps with aggravation by Herodotus*. "They ſacrifice," ſays that hiſtorian, "every hundredth man of their priſoners to the deity. They firſt pour libations of wine upon the head of the victim; they then cut his throat, extended over a chalice to receive the blood; they afterwards aſcend the pile of faggots, and waſh with the blood the erected ſcimeter, the emblem of the god:

* Herodoti, lib. 4. p. 277.

god; while this is performing by the priests above, those below, after having deprived the wretched sufferer of life, with the sacrificial knife separate the right arm from the shoulder, which they hurl into the air, and leave the body to putrify upon the ground." It appears, however, as if the victim in India generally perished by fire, or decapitation, or perhaps I may add, *inhumation*; for that they were no strangers to that practice, is evident from two figures exhibited in Mr. Nieubuhr's seventh plate, the heads of which are alone apparent, the bodies being *interred* quite up to the throat, and a Rajah appearing in the sculptures above, as if sitting in judgment upon the criminals.

The doctrine of the metempsychosis, originally intended to act as a check upon this barbarous propensity, in time became basely perverted, and operated as a powerful incentive towards the continuance of these rites of human sacrifice; disarming anguish of its sting, and the grave of its horrors. The Indians seem, like the Scythians, to have thought that in the future state the splendour of retinue, and the tender offices of domestic affection were absolutely necessary to the happiness of the deceased. The account which Texeira gives of so many women and slaves burning themselves with their lord, the Naique, or Viceroy of

Madura, is confirmed in a great degree by what Mr. Orme[a], in his Hiſtorical Fragments, reports, that with Seevajee's corpſe were burnt attendants, animals and wives. Marco Polo informs us that, in the iſland of Ceylon, a number of perſons of quality ſtiling themſelves, "faithful to the king in this world, and in the next," were accuſtomed to deſtroy themſelves when he died. In Tonquin, according to Tavernier, "many lords of the court are buried alive with the ſovereign;" and Barboſa, who, with the two preceeding authors, is quoted by M. Renaudot in the Anciennes Relations[b] in proof of the fact, which I am labouring to eſtabliſh beyond diſpute, aſſerts that in the Indies, particularly among the Naires, it was a cuſtom for the great men in the pay of the king, when he died, or fell in battle, to ſeek death by revenging his fall, or to lay violent hands upon themſelves in order *to bear him company*. At the death of the Scythian monarch, we read in Herodotus[c], that the principal officers of his houſhold were ſtrangled together with many fine horſes, and in his tomb were depoſited golden goblets, and other neceſſary domeſtic utenſils for his uſe in the other world.

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[a] See Ormes Hiſtorical Fragments of the Mogul empire, p. 126.

[b] See Anciennes Relations, 2d part, in note 7. p. 33. of the Engliſh verſion.

[c] Herodot. lib. 4. p. 70.

The laſt reſembling cuſtom which I ſhall notice between the Scythian and Indian nations, was their great veneration for the memory of their anceſtors. When upbraided by Darius for flying before his army, the former exclaim, "Purſue us to the ſepulchres of our anceſtors, and attempt to violate their hallowed remains, and you ſhall ſoon find with what deſperate valour the Scythians can fight." The Indians, we learn from Mr. Holwell, have ſo profound a veneration for the aſhes of their progenitors that on the faſt of Callee, worſhip and offerings are paid to their *manes*, and Mr. Wilkins, in a note upon the Heetopades, favours us with the additional information*, that the offerings conſiſted of conſecrated cakes, that the ceremony itſelf is denominated STRADHA, and that a Hindoo's hopes of happineſs after death greatly depend upon his having children to perform this ceremony, by which he expects that his ſoul will be releaſed from the torments of NARAKA, or hell. In his ſixth note upon the text of the GEETA, his account of this ceremony is ſtill more ample: for in that note he acquaints us that the Hindoos are enjoined by the Vedas to offer theſe cakes to the ghoſts of their anceſtors as far back as the third generation; that this greater ceremony of the Stradha is performed on the day of the new

* Heetopades, p. 271. and note 372.

moon in every month, but that they are commanded by those books, daily to propitiate them by an offering of water, which is called Tarpan; a word signifying, to satisfy, to appease. A speech of the Indian emperor, Dushmanta, in the Sacontala, remarkably exemplifies this observation of Mr. Wilkins. That emperor, struck with horror at the idea of dying childless, exclaims, "Ah me! the departed souls of my ancestors, who claim a share in the funeral cake, which I have no son to offer, are apprehensive of losing their due honour, when Dushmanta shall be no more on earth:—who then, alas! will perform in our family those obsequies which the Vedas prescribe?—My forefathers must drink, instead of a pure libation, this flood of tears, the only offering which a man who dies childless can make them." Mr. Wilkins judiciously remarks that these ceremonies were not unknown to the Greeks and Romans, in proof of which, if necessary, many instances might be brought from classical writers.

The investigation of this unpleasing, but curious, subject has too long detained us from the consideration of the other parts of the extensive system of the Hindoo mythology, without a comprehensive insight into which it is impossible to understand the pages of their early

early history, or arrive at any satisfactory knowledge of the hieroglyphics under which that history is veiled. Never did a belief in aerial beings, in the phantoms engendered by the warmth of a glowing and enthusiastic imagination so universally infect a people as that belief did in ancient times, and does, at this day, infect the people of Hindostan. In the Ayeen Akbery the world is said to be divided into ten quarters; over each of which presides a guardian spirit. Their names, and those of the quarters over which they rule, as stated in that authentic book, are thus arranged: Indree, Aujin, Jum, Benyroot, Wuirun, Bayoo, Kobeir, Jysan, Birmha, Nag; East, South-east, South, South-west, West, North-west, North, North-east, Above, Below. Of these Dewtah only two are deserving particular notice: Birmah, or Bramah, the prince of the Dewtahs, who presides over all *above*; and Nag, or, as Sir W. Jones[a] denominates him, SESHANAGA, who presides over all *below*. Of Bramah we have spoken above, and shall have occasion to speak much more hereafter. But of this sovereign of Patala, or the infernal regions, who also is the king of serpents, for the Hindoo Hell is composed

[a] I am aware that Indree the God of the firmament is also frequently called the prince of the Dewtah. But Brama is the supreme first created Dewtah. Consult the Gentoo Code, p. 39.

poſed of ſerpents, I am convinced my readers will think themſelves obliged to me for the following account taken from the Bhagavat, and inſerted from the author laſt quoted. Creeſhna is repreſented in that poem as deſcending with his favourite Arjun to the palace of this formidable divinity, and he is thus deſcribed, "He had a gorgeous appearance, with a thouſand heads, and on each of them a crown ſet with reſplendent jewels, one of which was larger and brighter than the reſt; his eyes gleamed like flaming torches, but his neck, his tongues, and his body were black; the ſkirts of his habiliments were yellow, and a ſparkling jewel hung in every one of his ears: his arms were extended and adorned with rich bracelets; and his hands bore the holy ſhell, the radiated weapon, the mace for war, and the Lotos."

Beſides theſe, the Indians have a guardian genius, preſiding over water, named VARUNA[a]; over fire, named AGNI, the forger of the fiery ſhafts called from him, Agnyaſtra[b]; and over the winds, named PAVAN. All the fanciful characters of a mythology, not greatly diſſimilar from that of Greece and Rome, ſeem to have prevailed among the Hindoos from the earlieſt periods.

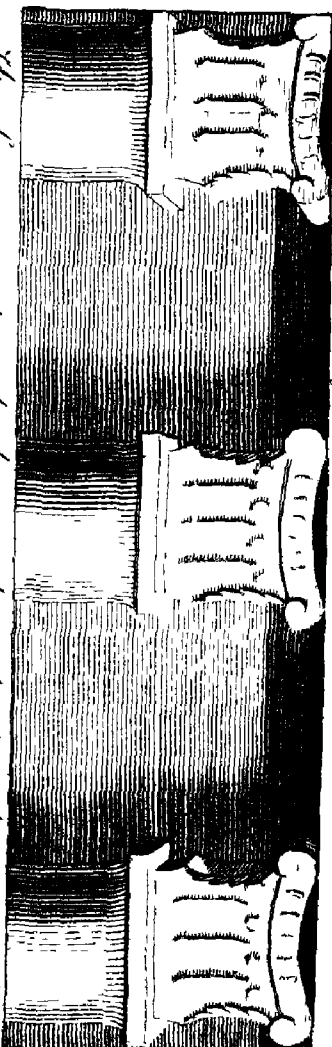
[a] See an engraving of Varuna with her inſignia, oppoſite p. 215. of the firſt volume of the Aſiatic Reſearches.

[b] Aſiatic. Reſearch. Vol. I p. 245. [c] Ibid 258.

periods. They have CARTICEYA[b], the god of war, formidable with six heads, and bearing, in his numerous hands, spears, sabres, and other hostile weapons; whose prowess is not inferior to the Mars of Rome. They have LUKEE, the goddess of plenty and wife of Veeshnu the preserver; who, in Mr Holwell's descriptive prints, is represented crowned with ears of grain, and encircled by a plant, *bearing fruit*, forcibly reminding us of the Ceres of the ancients. They have SERASWATTI, the protectress of arts and sciences, with her Palmira leaf, and her reed or pen for writing; ornaments more peculiarly characteristic of her high station than those which graced the armed Minerva of the Greeks. They have a more beautiful Cupid in CAMA, the god of love, with flowery shafts and cany bow: although a regard to truth forbids me to add, that they have a more decent Venus in BHAVANEE, the consort of Seeva, and goddess of generation; in honour of whom, on all the walls of the Pagodas of Hindostan, sacred to that deity, such pictures are delineated and such images are engraven as though by no means inconsistent with *their*, are not at all compatible with *our* notions of delicacy and decorum. These are indeed the fanciful creation of poets and painters; but the

[b] Asiat Research. 252, with an engraving. Carticeya is called Kartik by Mr Holwell who tells a curious story about this god, p 147.

with ſuch tranſcendant and unceaſing ſplendor in eaſtern countries, whoſe ray hath kindled the devotions of mankind from age to age, and hath been the great fountain of idolatry in India. Indeed the moſt ancient ſuperſtition of all nations has been the worſhip of the SUN, as the lord of heaven, and governor of the world, and in particular it prevailed in Phœnicia, Chaldæa, Egypt, and, from later information, we may add, Peru and Mexico. Repreſented in a variety of ways, and concealed under a multitude of fanciful names, through all the revolutions of time the great Luminary of heaven hath exacted from the generations of men the tribute of devotion.

How particularly the ancient Perſians were addicted to this mode of worſhip, how profound and univerſal was their veneration of FIRE, and particularly of the SOLAR FIRE, is evident in every page of Dr. Hyde, who has made that religion the ſubject of his accurate inveſtigation. The infatuated votaries of this religion were forbidden to ſpit into the fire, or to throw water upon it, even if the metropolis were in flames. The Magi however, as has been before remarked, did not deny a SUPREME PRESIDING PRINCIPLE, the creator and governor of the univerſe, who was the proper object of man's adoration, but they conſidered the SUN as his image in the vi-

The Sun is pourtrayed shining above the Fire kindled by his own Ray and over the Head of the Devotee is the Image of his Soul ascending upon a Cloud to Heaven

from Dr Hyde

ſible univerſe, as a faint copy of the bright original, worthy to be honoured with external worſhip and devout proſtration. They imagined his throne to be ſeated in the SUN; and that it was the paradiſe of the bleſſed. From the Magi of Perſia the idolatrous infection might eaſily ſpread to the Brachmanes of India, between whom an occaſional intercourſe from the earlieſt ages may, without violating probability, be ſuppoſed to have exiſted. Under the character of the god SURYA, of whom, and his car, drawn by ſeven green * horſes, and guided by his charioteer, ARUN, or the Dawn, an engraving is given in the Aſiatic Reſearches, the SOLAR ORB is regarded with adoration by the Hindoos, and the ſect more particularly devoted to the worſhip of that deity are called SAURA. Indeed it is not improbable that in very remote æras, the Indians held the Sun in almoſt as general veneration as their Perſian neighbours. We are informed by a writer[a], who viſited India ſeventeen hundred years ago, that he there beheld a moſt ſuperb temple erected in honour of that planet, the walls of which were of red marble, reſembling fire, and interſperſed with ſtreaks of gold. On the pavement of this temple was an image of the radiant divinity, hardly inferior in ſplendour to his own dazzling ſphere;

* Green, as the emblem, I preſume, of eternal youth.

[a] Philoſtratus in vit. Apollon, lib. 2. p 2.

ſphere: his rays being imitated in a boundleſs profuſion of rubies, pearls and diamonds, of inestimable value, arranged in a moſt judicious manner, and darting forth a luſtre ſcarcely tolerable to the organs of ſight. As this account of Apollonius may be conſidered as ſuſpicious, I ſhall here inſert a deſcription of the TEMPLE of the SUN from the Ayeen Akbery, which, although Mr. Gladwin conceives Abul Fazil to have been deceived in regard to its magnitude, ſince no traces of this vaſt fabric at preſent remain, will yet be conſidered as a proof that ſuch a worſhip did actually flouriſh there at ſome remote period in its meridian glory.

"Near to Jagernaut is the temple of the SUN, in the erecting of which was expended the whole revenue of Oriſſa for twelve years. No one can behold this immenſe edifice, without being ſtruck with amazement. The wall, which ſurrounds the whole, is one hundred and fifty cubits high, and nineteen cubits thick. There are three entrances to it. At the eaſtern gate are two very fine figures of elephants, each with a man upon his trunk. On the weſt, are two ſurprizing figures of horſemen completely armed; and over the northern gates are carved two tygers, who, having killed two elephants, are ſitting upon them. In the front of the gate is a pillar of black ſtone, of an octagonal form,

 fifty

fifty cubits high. There are nine flights of steps; after ascending which, you come into an extensive enclosure, where you discover a large dome, constructed of stone, upon which are carved the SUN and the STARS, and, round them, is a border, on which is represented a variety of human figures, expressing the different passions; some kneeling, others prostrated with their faces upon the earth; together with minstrels, and a number of strange and wonderful animals, such as never existed but in imagination." This is said to be a work of seven hundred and thirty years antiquity: it was erected by a RAJA. The Ayeen Akbery* farther informs us, that some of the Hindoo philosophers consider the fixed stars and planets as BEINGS, and as borrowing their light from the sun; others assert that they derive their light from the moon, and believe each to be under the influence of some celestial spirit; while others, again, affirm, that the stars are the souls of men departed this life, and raised to this high dignity in reward of their virtues and austerities.

At this day the Indian Rajas are fond of tracing back to the solar deity their fabulous origin, and Mr. Dow† acquaints us, that he

 himself

*Ayeen Akbery, Vol. III. p. 11 †Dow, Vol I. p 31.

himſelf was in poſſeſſion of a long liſt of a dynaſty of kings, who boaſted the diſtinguiſhed title of SURYA-buns, and CHANDRA-buns, or children of the ſun and moon. The Aſiatic Reſearches confirm and explain this intelligence by informing us, that SURYA* is believed to have frequently deſcended from his car in a human ſhape, and to have begotten an earthly progeny, equally renowned in the Indian ſtories with the Heliades of Greece; and that another great Indian family are called the children of the moon, or CHANDRA, under which form ESWARA, or the God of nature, is often worſhipped. We muſt not be ſurpriſed, the preſident of the Aſiatic Society obſerves, at finding, on a cloſe examination, that the characters of all the pagan deities, male and female, melt into each other, and, at laſt, into one or two; for, it ſeems a well-founded opinion, that the whole croud of Gods and Goddeſſes, in ancient Rome, and modern Varanes, means only the powers of nature, and, principally, the SUN. He owns himſelf inclined to believe that not only Creeſhna or Veeſhnu, but even Brama and Seeva, when united, and expreſſed by the myſtical word, OM, an expreſſion that frequently

*Aſiat. Reſearch. Vol. I. p. 263.

frequently occurs in Sanſcreet invocations* of the deity, were deſigned by the firſt idolaters to repreſent the SOLAR FIRE By the triliteral word A. U. M. which letters coaleſce and form OM, the triple divinity, Brama, Veeſhnu, and Seeva, are meant to be expreſſed; or, in other words, the power of the Almighty to create, to preſerve, and to deſtroy. It may be added that the term OM is conſidered in ſo ſacred a light, that it never eſcapes the lips of a pious Hindoo, but is the ſubject of his meditation in holy and profound ſilence. Their mode of adoring the SUN is ſaid, by Lucian, in his treatiſe de Saltatione, to have conſiſted in a circular dance, in imitation of that orb's ſuppoſed motion round the earth, by which all nature was gladdened, and from which the various ranks of beings derived light and ſupport. SURYA KOOND is mentioned, under the Subah of Owd, in the Ayeen Akbery, as a place of religious worſhip, very celebrated, and much frequented; and a feſtival, called the SURYA POOJA, or the worſhip of the ſun, Mr. Holwell† acquaints us, is

 ſtill

* It particularly occurs in a moſt ſublime prayer to BOODH, tranſlated by Mr Wilkins, in Aſiat. Reſearch. Vol. I p. 285.

† See Holwell on the Gentoo faſts and feſtivals. India Tracts, part II. p. 134.

ſtill obſerved on the ſeventh day of the new moon, in January, when peculiar offerings of flowers are made to that luminary in the Ganges. The veſtiges of this ſuperſtition are, in fact, at this day, evident in all the ſacred rites and multiform ceremonies of the Bramins. At their firſt putting on the ZENAR, or ſacred cord of *three threads*, the myſtic ſymbol of their faith, they learn the *gayterie*, which are certain words in praiſe of the SUN. At ſun-riſe they turn to the Eaſt, and, filling the palms of their hands with water, and, at the ſame time repeating a prayer, they throw it towards that luminary. They preſerve, conſtantly burning, a kind of *ſacred fire*, kindled by the friction of two pieces of palaſs wood, with which they perform the howm, or *burnt ſacrifice.* The new-born babe of a Bramin is obliged to be expoſed to the *ſolar beam*, and, in the words of the Ayeen Akbery,* to conclude, and in ſome degree to explain, the myſtic rite, THEY WORSHIP GOD IN THE SUN, AND IN FIRE.

The following paſſages, in proof of what has been advanced, concerning the veneration entertained by the Indians for the ſun and fire,

*Ayeen Akbery, Vol I. p. 215, 220, 227, where all theſe various circumſtances are ſtated at large.

fire, are extracted from the three principal translations, from the Sanscreet, which have yet appeared in the English language; I mean the GEETA, and the HEETOPADES, published by Mr. Wilkins, and the beautiful drama of SACONTALA, or, *The fatal Ring*, by Sir William Jones. These three compositions are of the most venerable antiquity, and in them, doubtless, are displayed the manners, and the principles, prevailing at those remote æras in which they were written.

In the GEETA, Arjun is informed by Creeshna, that "God is in the *fire* of the altar, and that the devout, with offerings, direct their worship unto God in the *fire*," p. 54. "I am the *fire*, I am the victim," p. 80. The Divinity is frequently characterized in that book, as in other Sanscreet compositions, by the word OM, that mystic emblem of the Deity in India, bearing, probably, the same signification as the Egyptian ON, which, Sir William Jones observes,* is generally supposed to mean the SUN. Besides innumerable allusions, throughout the text, to the "ardent fire, the glorious sun, the immeasurable light," in the episode annexed, the refulgent CHAKRA, or warlike weapon of Narayan, beautiful, yet

 terrible,

*Asiatic Researches, Vol. I. p. 242.

terrible, to behold, is ſaid to have glowed like the ſacrificial flame," and to have "burnt like the oil fed fire." Pages 150 and 151.

In the HEETOPADES it is ſaid, that "*fire* is the ſuperior of the Bramins, as the Bramin is the ſuperior of the tribes," p. 35. In the note, on this paſſage, Mr. Wilkins remarks, that this element, in ancient times, ſeems to have been univerſally *deified*, that the Hindoos are enjoined, by the Vedas, to light up a fire, produced in the manner I before ſtated from the Ayeen Akbery, and to cheriſh it as long as they live. With this fire, he adds, all their ſacrifices are burnt, their nuptial altar flames, and, finally, the funeral pile is kindled: "The SUN ſhould be worſhipped on the back, the GOD OF FIRE on the belly." P. 101.

In the SACONTALA ſtill more numerous inſtances occur, in which the orb of the ſun, and the hallowed fire, are ſpoken of, and addreſſed, in terms of adoration: "Water was the firſt work of the Creator, and *fire* receives the oblations ordained by law; the ſacrifice is performed with ſolemnity, may ISA, the God of nature," (a perſonification of the ſun, the Isis of the Egyptians,) "bleſs and ſuſtain you!" The following paſſage will prove of two-fold utility,

utility, towards explaining and illuſtrating what has before been remarked: "O king," exclaim the pupils of the venerable Canna, amidſt the central glooms of their holy grove, "while we are beginning our evening-ſacrifice, the figures of blood-thirſty demons, embrowned by clouds, collected at the departure of the day, glide over the *ſacred hearth*, and ſpread conſternation around." P. 38. "My ſweet child, there has been a happy omen: the young Bramin who officiated in our morning ſacrifice, though his ſight was impeded by clouds of ſmoke, dropped the clarified butter into the very center of the *adorable flame*." "When he entered the place where the *holy fire* was blazing, he heard a voice from heaven pronouncing divine meaſures." "As the wood, Sami, becomes pregnant with *myſterious fire*," p. 43. "My beſt beloved, come and walk with me round the *ſacrificial fire*; may *theſe fires* preſerve thee! *fires*, which ſpring to their appointed ſtations on the holy hearth, and conſume the conſecrated wood, while the freſh blades of myſterious Cuſa-graſs lie ſcattered around them! *ſacramental fires*, which deſtroy ſin with the riſing fumes of clarified butter!" P. 47. "Could Arun" (the charioteer of the ſun, that is, the dawn) "diſpel the ſhades of night,

if the DEITY WITH A THOUSAND BEAMS had not placed him before the car of day?" P. 85.

In selecting these passages from the drama of Sacontala, I have reluctantly passed over pages glowing with all the splendour of Oriental imagery, crowded with such novel and beautiful descriptions, and breathing such elevated sentiments of friendship, as well as such impassioned strains of tender affection, that I cannot too strongly recommend to the reader an attentive perusal of the whole piece, and he will not fail heartily to join with me, in hoping that the translator may recede from his declared resolution to engage no farther in tasks of a similar nature.

The MOON, the next conspicuous luminary of heaven, is by no means without *his* tribe of adorers in Hindostan. *His*, I say; for, contrary to all other systems of mythology, the MOON shines forth to the Hindoos a male divinity. This is surely an argument that proves how little they have condescended to borrow from other nations; for, in this male deity, we are unable to trace even the Isis of Egypt, whom Herodotus * declares to have been constantly

* Herodoti lib ii p. 118 Stephani Edit. 1592. This whole second book of Herodotus, and part of the third, treats of the Egyptians, their history, religion, and manners, and therefore I have minutely attended to it.

ſtantly repreſented and worſhipped, at Buſiris, under the form of a woman with the horns of a cow, (as IO was in Greece;) upon which account, and becauſe that animal was ſacred to Iſis, the cow was held in the higheſt veneration throughout Egypt. The Indian name of the MOON is CHANDRA, and Mr. Wilkins, our unerring guide, informs us,* that he is drawn by the fancy of the Hindoo poets as a deity, ſitting in a ſplendid chariot drawn by two antelopes, and holding in his right hand a rabbit. We learn from the Heetopades, that, to him, fountains were dedicated. Of thoſe ſacred fountains there are many in Hindoſtan: and, in particular, the Ayeen Akbery reports,† that, in the village of Kehrow, in Caſhmere, there are no leſs than 360; a number worthy of notice, becauſe the exact number of the days of the ancient year, before it was reformed by more correct obſervation. To pierce the hitherto-unexplored depths of the Hindoo ſyſtem of aſtronomy, connected as that ſyſtem is with their religion, is alike beyond the ſcope of my ability and the means of information in my poſſeſſion. If encouraged by the public to proceed in theſe inveſtigations into the ancient hiſtory and ſciences of that country, I ſhall in a future chapter

* Heetopades, p 177, and note 235.

† Ayeen Akbery, Vol. II p 159.

ter of this diſſertation, which I ſhall extend through every volume, attempt the arduous taſk of preſenting my readers with the ſubſtance of what *is already known* on that head; and ſhall principally regulate my reſearches by the chapter on aſtronomy in the Ayeen Akberry, which is a profeſſed extract from the famous Surya Sudhant of India, a book compoſed, Abul Fazil informs us, "ſome hundred thouſand years ago;" by M. Bailly's celebrated "Traité de l'Aſtronomie Indienne et Orientale;" by Mr. Playfair's accurate and ingenious Diſſertation, lately publiſhed in the ſecond volume of the Tranſactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and by the vaſt treaſure of information to be collected from Mr. Coſtard's profound Treatiſe upon the Aſtronomy of the Chaldæans, Arabians, and other eaſtern nations. For the preſent it will be ſufficient for us to take a general retroſpect of the gradual advances made by the human mind, from contemplating and admiring the celeſtial orbs, to deifying and adoring them. This will in its conſequences lead us to a more particular conſideration of that other principal ſource of all mythology mentioned before, viz. an immoderate reſpect paid to the memory of powerful, wiſe, and virtuous, anceſtors, eſpecially the founders

founders of kingdoms, legiſlators, and warriors.

Devoted to paſtoral life, and ſcattered over the extenſive plains of Aſia, the ancient fathers of the human race could not avoid being deeply ſtruck with the number, the beauty, and the ſplendour, of the heavenly bodies. Amidſt the ſilence of ſurrounding night, in thoſe delightful regions where the mildneſs of the climate allows the inhabitants to ſleep in the open air, the wakeful eye of contemplation beheld and marked the ſlow progreſſive motion of thoſe bodies through the clear blue ſky above them. They obſerved their various mutations, they noted their diſtinguiſhing phænomena, the riſing of ſome, and the ſetting of others; and, from that aſcenſion and decline, they learned to regulate their conduct as to the times and the ſeaſons proper for the ſowing of grain and the tillage of the ground. In proceſs of time they formed catalogues of the ſtars, they arranged them under various claſſes, and regiſtered them in regular ſeries. They portioned out the viſible firmament itſelf into forty-eight different conſtellations, and, in conformity to the hieroglyphic taſte of the times, diſtinguiſhed thoſe conſtellations by the figures of various animals, and other imaginary

nary ſimilitudes. From long and accurate obſervation of the conſequences attending the particular ſituation of ſome of them in the heavens, they ſuppoſed theſe revolving orbs to have an influence upon the earth and upon the ſeaſons; and the Greek and Roman poets, probably imitating the ancient writers of Egypt and Syria, crowd their pages with alluſions to thoſe ſuppoſed influences.

Non hæc Pleiades faciunt, nec *aquoſus* Orion.*
Nec ſævus Arcturi *cadentis*
Impetus, aut *orientis* Hædi †

A paſſage, which occurs in the ancient and venerable book of Job, ſeems pointedly to allude to the reigning ſuperſtition of the day. *Canſt thou reſtrain the ſweet influences of Pleiades; or looſen the bands of Orion?* It was natural for thoſe, who maintained the doctrine of their influence upon the elements of nature, to extend ſtill farther their romantic conjectures, and to aſſert a ſimilar predominant influence of the celeſtial orbs in all terreſtrial concerns, but eſpecially in the important and intereſting events which befal great nations; in the proſperity and deſolation of kingdoms; in the elevation to empire of triumphant virtue; and in the downfal of defeated tyranny. The planetary train, that conſtitute our own ſyſtem,

as

* Propertius, ii. 16. 51. † Hor. iii. Carm. i. 27.

as performing their revolutions nearer the earth, were thought to have a more particular aſcendency over the fate of its inhabitants; and the period of their tranſit over the ſun's diſc, and that of their occaſionally coming into conjunction with any other conſtellation, was regarded as a period pregnant with the moſt awful events, and productive of the moſt aſtoniſhing viciſſitudes.

Impreſſed, therefore, with alternate wonder and terror at beholding theſe imagined effects of their influence upon this globe, from vigilantly obſerving, mankind proceeded by degrees to reſpect and venerate them, and intenſe ardour of contemplation in time mounted to all the fervor of devotion. Some of the ancients ſuppoſed the STARS to be inhabited by beings, who not only guided their motions, but directed their benign or pernicious influences, and, conſequently, to thoſe preſiding beings they addreſſed their adoration. Others imagined the STARS to be themſelves animated intelligences, or ZOPHESEMIN,* and paid to the *ſphere* the worſhip due to its Maker. But almoſt every nation of the ancient world united in conſidering them as the reſidence of departed ſpirits, and the glorious receptacles of beatified virtue. According to the preceding extracts

* See Biſhop Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p 2.

tracts from the Ayeen Akbery, the Hindoo philosophers were deeply infected with each of these errors; and the accounts given by Sir Robert Barker* in the Philosophical Transactions of the remains of astronomical and mathematical instruments, "stupendously large, immovable from the spot, and constructed of stone, some of them upwards of twenty feet in height," which he saw in the ancient observatory of Benares, as well as the discovery which Mr. Call† reports, in the same book, he himself made of the signs of the zodiac on the cielings of many of the more ancient *choulteries* of the Peninsula, strongly inclines us to think that the science of astronomy was, in ancient India, carried to the utmost height of perfection, attainable in those periods and by those instruments; and at the same time it was undoubtedly attended with all those degrading superstitions, such as divination, incantation, and judicial astrology, which were its inseparable concomitants in that early æra. It is a most singular circumstance, that the days of the week, in India, are arranged as in Egypt and Greece, according to the number of the planets, and are distinguished by similar appellations, and, for my own part, I have not a doubt

* Phil. Transact. Vol. lxvii p. 598.
† Phil. Transact Vol. lxii. p 353.

doubt but that the various ſpheres, or *boobuns*, of purification, through which the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis, as explained by Mr. Halhed*, has doomed the ſoul to paſs in its progreſs to conſummate happineſs and perfection, have a direct alluſion to the *planets*. But I am launching into a vaſt ocean, in which it was not at preſent my intention to venture my ſmall bark.

To thoſe bright and conſpicuous manſions of the ſky, as I have obſerved, the ſervile adulation of the ancient nations of the earth exalted the departed ſpirits of illuſtrious kings and legiſlators; while the partial fondneſs and blind zeal of individuals wafted to the ſame happy regions the ſouls of their deceaſed progenitors who were venerable for religion and virtue. A variety of paſſages in the ancient poets may be adduced in proof of this aſſertion, but particularly one in Virgil, who, in a ſtrain of unmanly flattery to Auguſtus, while yet living, aſks him among which of the conſtellations he will chooſe to take up his future reſidence.—

> Anne novum ſidus tardis te menſibus addas
> Qua locus ERIGONEN inter CHELASQUE ſequentes
> Panditur?

* See page 46 of his Preface to the Gentoo Code, quarto edition, and page 41 of the ſame Preface, where the Sanſcreet names of the days of the week are enumerated in their proper order, as they alſo are in the Ayeen Akbery, p. 12.

> Panditur: Ipse tibi jam brachia contrahit ardens
> SCORPIUS, et cœli justa plus parte reliquit.
>
> Georg. i. 33.

These lines are also quoted by that ingenious astronomer, Mr. Costard,* but for another purpose, the elucidation of an astronomical remark; and it would appear from that remark, that the accuracy of the poet's description does him greater honour than the fulsome compliment contained in them did Augustus.

The contagion of *sidereal worship*, in consequence of the stars being regarded as Animated Intelligences, or as inhabited by divinities, spread rapidly and universally among all the nations of the eastern world, except among that favoured people to whom the Almighty thought proper to reveal the glorious doctrines of the true religion. For, thus, in the most ancient and most sublime drama which the human intellect ever produced, the devout JOB makes protestation of his innocence as to the crime of this prevailing idolatry.† *If I beheld the* SUN *when it shined, or the* MOON *walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this, also, were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge; for I should then have denied the God that is above!*

The

* See Costard's Astronomy, p. 19 † Job, c. xxxi. v. 26.

The planets, in time, became distinguished by the names of the most renowned personages in fabulous antiquity, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Diana; but these orbs, from their rising and setting, being frequently concealed from the view of the enthusiastic adorer, invention supplied their place by forming representative images of those fancied deities, to whom, after solemnly consecrating them, they paid their devotion with as much fervour as to the real planet. In this practice, as Dr. Prideaux * has judiciously observed, we trace the first origin of the *Sabian Superstition*, or worship of idols, in which abomination the antient pagan world were so deeply immersed, and, from this period, Saturn, Jupiter, and the other sidereal divinities, continued to be holden in the most sacred veneration through all the periods of the Assyrian, Greek, and Roman, empires. Before these figures, which they invoked by the several names their blind bigotry had assigned them, in deep caverns and woody recesses, the first temples of the

* See Prideaux's Connections, vol i. p 178, and, likewise, those of Dr Shuckford, vol. ii. p 388, who, notwithstanding the severe attacks of Warburton, on this subject of the origin of the various species of Pagan idolatry, has displayed erudition little inferior to that of the haughty critic.

world, they performed their myſterious rites; they kindled the ſacred fire, of which their glowing ſpheres ſeemed to be formed; and they offered oblations to them of the nobleſt beaſts of the field and the choiceſt productions of the earth. In the wild delirium of their zeal, and under the impulſes of a ſacred fury, they ſhouted aloud the lofty pæans of praiſe and triumph; they mingled in the circular dance, which was intended to imitate that of the planets; and they tried the moſt potent ſpells, and uttered the moſt tremendous incantations, in full confidence of drawing down into thoſe ſymbolic figures, the ſame powerful ſpirits which were ſuppoſed to roll them through the æther, and the ſame [illegible] baleful influences which they were [illegible] to diſpenſe from on high.

That a conſiderable portion of the hieroglyphic ſculptures and paintings, in the temples of Hindoſtan, have an aſtronomical alluſion, has never been doubted by thoſe who have accurately ſurveyed and attentively conſidered them; though their latent meaning and intricate hiſtory have never been completely developed. The blaze of glory ſtreaming from the radiated crowns on the heads of all the AVATARS, whoſe figures are engraved in the

Aſiatic

Asiatic Researches, speak their descent from the regions of light and glory; the emblematical ornaments of serpents that deck the venerated statues of the GOD-RAJAHS, who frown on the walls of the various cavern pagodas; the figures of sacred and sidereal animals, sculptured near them; the sacerdotal vases for oblation; the consecrated bells which the hands of some statues bear, and the sacred zenar and staff of Bramins which distinguish others; all these circumstances united evince their immediate connection with the profoundest mysteries of science and with the most awful rites of religion.

If we cast our eye over the long catalogue of Egyptian divinities; if we attentively peruse the varied page of their history, and examine the discriminating features of their several characters; we shall find them, for the most part, to be nothing more than HEROES DEIFIED. Thus, Vulcan, Bacchus, Thoth, Hercules, having, by their skill in arts, or their prowess in arms, greatly benefited the early inhabitants of the world; as, for instance, Vulcan, by the invention of the forge, and by instructing mankind in the use of fire; Sesostris, or Bacchus, by teaching them the right method of agriculture and of planting the vine; Thoth,

or Hermes, by the invention of letters and the patronage of science, Hercules, by the unparallelled labour of draining the lakes of Egypt, and by overthrowing in battle Busiris and its other tyrannic princes, those giants in power and monsters in vice, by such illustrious exploits these august personages successively rose to immortal honours. The same remark, probably, holds good in regard to India, or even applies with still greater force. If we could divest the history of its most ancient sovereigns of the fabulous ornaments, with which adulatory poetry and reigning superstition have decorated them, they would appear to be only a race of dignified mortals, distinguished by their wisdom as legislators, their erudition as philosophers, or their fortitude in battle. Thus RAMA, one of the great incarnate deities, whom the Indians believe to have been an appearance on earth of the *preserving Power*, and whom Sir William Jones takes to be the Indian Bacchus, when stript of his divine honours, will appear to be only the SOVEREIGN OF AYODHYA, a conqueror of the highest renown, and the deliverer of nations from tyrants. Thus Brahma himself, if we may be allowed for a moment to lose sight of the etymology of his name, and rend the allegoric veil that shadows

shadows his person, might only have been the GODLIKE MORTAL, profoundly skilled in theology and legislation, who first polished a barbarous people, regulated their conduct by an admirable code of salutary laws, and gave energy and stability to an unsettled government. Mr. Scrafton is of opinion that Brahma was King, as well as Legislator, over all the vast continent of India,* and that he intended by the solemn obligations of religion to fix the attachment of his subjects to their own country as well as to bind them to the observance of his laws. The learned personage, to whose deep researches into the Indian mythology I have so often had occasion to refer, seems to countenance a similar opinion, when he offers a conjecture that the former deity was in reality *Rama*, the son of *Cush*, † who might have established the first regular government in this part of Asia. The Ayeen Akbery, too, appears to decide the matter, where that book affirms that RAMCHUND was Rajah of Owd,‡ in the *Tretah Yug*, and that he united in himself the two-fold office of King and Prophet.

 The

* See Mr. Scrafton's Reflections on the Government of Hindostan, p. 5.

† Asiat. Research. vol. i. p. 258.

‡ Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 41.

The writers, who flouriſhed in Greece and Rome, had, as I before remarked, but a very imperfect idea of the true principles of the religion of the Indians. Jupiter Ammon, Bacchus, Pan, and Pluto, are ſaid, by thoſe writers, to have been the principal divinities worſhipped in India. Strabo* expreſsly ſays, that they worſhipped Jupiter Pluvialis, the river Ganges, and Εγχωρίους δαίμονες, *Indigetes genios*. Such were the Grecian appellations for the ſeveral deities, or rather attributes of deity, adored throughout Hindoſtan. With far more truth was the celebrated GANGES affirmed, by the ſame writer, to be an object of ſuperſtitious veneration, when, charged with the bleſſings of providence, he deſcended in majeſty from the mountains, and, with his overflowings, fertilized the thirſty ſoil! In fact, the legiſlator, whoſe ſublime precepts improved, the hero, whoſe reſiſtleſs ſword defended, the patriot, whoſe inventive fancy adorned, with uſeful art, the country that gave them birth, received the fervent prayers of the grateful Hindoo, was firſt remembered with admiration, and then idolized. Without referring to the Ægyptian Apis, we may aſſert, that the very animal whoſe milk nouriſhed him, and whoſe labours

* Strabonis Geograph. lib. xv. p. 682.

labours turned the fruitful sod, received his tributary homage, and was ranked in order next to a divinity. This is the general key that unlocks the portals of the grand temple of Indian superstition, and perhaps, taken in a more general point of view, of all the superstitions of every region, and of every denomination upon earth. To the philosophic eye, that contemplates without prejudice their endless variety, this is the universal clue to their full developement, and thus only can the mighty maze be intimately and successfully explored. But it is now necessary that we should once more, and for the last time, direct our attention towards PERSIA.

This profound reverence, equally entertained by the Magi of Persia and the Brachmans of India, for the SOLAR ORB and for FIRE, forms another striking feature of resemblance between the religion of Zoroaster and that of Brahma. If any person, deeply skilled in the principles of both systems of theology, were minutely to examine and compare them together, I am convinced that, except in the dreadful instance of that incestuous commerce allowed his disciples by the Persian legislator, and some peculiar local superstitions practised by the Indians, no very material difference would be

found between them as to the great and prominent features of each. But Zoroaſter, according to Ulug-Beg, quoted by Dr. Hyde, was the greateſt mathematician and aſtronomer that the eaſt in thoſe remote periods ever ſaw. He had ſo far penetrated into the great arcana of nature, and had raiſed the Magian name to ſuch a height, that, in the darker ages which ſucceeded, they were ſuppoſed to poſſeſs ſupernatural knowledge and powers; and hence the odious term of *magic* has been ever ſince beſtowed upon arts that ſeemed to ſurpaſs human power to attain, and that of *magicians* upon thoſe who practiſed them. In the union of aſtronomy and theology, which were ſiſter-ſciences in thoſe days, we ſhall perhaps find an explanation of thoſe myſterious rites of cavern-worſhip, the origin and nature of which have ſo long perplexed the ingenious in their enquiries concerning the ſpecies of devotion ſuppoſed to have been anciently practiſed in the caverns of [illegible] and ELEPHANTA.

Whatever might have been the oldeſt ſpecies of devotion originally celebrated either in Perſia or India, and moſt likely, from human nature being every where open to the ſame impreſſions, it was this worſhip of the Sun, it is probable that Brahma, and it is certain

that

that Zoroaster, only improved upon the popular superstition; rejecting the more gross, and retaining the more refined parts of the ancient rites and ceremonies already instituted in each country. Of Zoroaster there are two opinions: the first is, that he was king of Bactria, and, according to Justin,* lived so early as the days of Ninus, by whom he was slain in battle; the second and more generally received opinion is that maintained by Dr. Hyde, who asserts that he flourished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, about 520 years before Christ, that he was of no very exalted origin, and that he resided in Babylon during the Jewish captivity, where he obtained that intimate acquaintance with the doctrines of the Hebrews which appear so conspicuously in many parts of his ZEND. The learned Drs. Hyde† and Prideaux,‡ in my humble opinion too far violate probability when they represent Zoroaster to have been himself a native of Palestine, of Jewish parentage, and to have lived a menial servant in the families of either Ezra or Daniel. The profound and various learning which he possessed supposes a descent far

* Justin lib. 1 c. 1.

† Hyde's Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. cap. xxiv. p. 314.

‡ Prideaux's Connections, vol. 1. p. 213.

far leſs inglorious, and an education far more poliſhed, than a mere ſlave could poſſibly have enjoyed, and, if he had been a Jew, he would not have neglected to enforce upon his diſciples the neceſſity of that *peculiar rite* which forms the characteriſtic diſtinction of the progeny of Abraham. He found the people of Perſia immerſed in the depth of that groſs idolatry, the fire-worſhip, eſtabliſhed by the Magians; for, though they pretended to worſhip God in the fire, the Deity himſelf had long been forgotten in the ſymbol of his worſhip. He purged their minds of the impure and ſenſual depravity. He revived among them the principles of that genuine religion, which time, and objects more palpable, had effaced from their minds. He called himſelf the reſtorer of the primitive devotion of Abraham, that great and enlightened patriarch, ſo highly venerated throughout all the eaſt, and, as he had read that the Almighty ſpoke to Moſes out of the *burning buſh*, and to the whole aſſembled ſons of Iſrael out of the *fire*, that glowed on mount Sinai; that he had manifeſted his divine preſence to them, on their march from Egypt, under the appearance of a column of *flame*; that he reſided in the *luminous glory*, diſplayed between the cherubim, and that he had commanded

manded a never-dying *flame* to be cherished on the great altar of his temple at Jerusalem, on which the burnt sacrifices were offered: animated by these circumstances, the artful theologue pretended that he himself had been admitted to a vision of the Most High; and, being taken up into heaven, had been addressed by the Eternal from the midst of a vast and pure circle of surrounding flame. By this plea he justified a practice which he would have found it difficult to crush; he gratified the wishes of the prejudiced; he obtained the approbation of the sovereign, and he effected a change without the hazard of an innovation.

Brahma being, avowedly, a mythologic personage, I can give no historical account of the æra when the code, that bears his name, was acknowledged as the sovereign law of India; for, that is surely inadmissible which Mr. Dow's prefatory Dissertation fixes, viz. 4887, from the year 1769, when that Dissertation was written, and consequently above 4900 years previous to the present year. From the variety of the doctrines of which the sacred volumes of India treat, and of the sciences which they discuss; from the clashing, and, in the instance of sanguinary sacrifices

and

and vindictive incantations; from the abſolute contradictions of the mandates inculcated in them, as well as from their bulk, it is probable that the Vedas were not the labour of one legiſlator only, but the reſult of the collective wiſdom of ages: the auguſt fabric of many legiſlators, accommodating themſelves, as all legiſlators occaſionally muſt, to the fluctuating principles of the times, the ſucceſſive ſuperſtitions, or the progreſſive improvement of the people. This idea is, throughout his treatiſe, maintained by Mr. Holwell,* who, from evidence obtained in India, aſſerts, that the fourth Veda, in particular, is a publication fifteen hundred years poſterior to the other three. This opinion is, I know, combated in the prefatory Diſſertation of Mr. Dow,† and by ſome other writers ſtill more reſpectable; yet I have ſolid authority for thinking Mr. Holwell's aſſertion to be founded in truth. The argument in favour of this opinion, advanced in the Aſiatic Reſearches,‡ is two-fold. The firſt ariſes from the very ſingular circumſtance of only three Vedas having been mentioned in the moſt ancient and venerable of the Hindoo

* Holwell, part II. p. 13. † Dow's prefat. Diſſert. p. 30.

‡ Aſiat. Reſearch. Vol. I. p. 346 and 347. See alſo, on this ſubject, Mr. Wilkins's preface to the Bhagvat Geeta, p. 25; whoſe argument is deciſive.

Hindoo writers; and the names of thoſe three Vedas occur in their proper order in the compound word, *Rigyajuhſama*, that is to ſay, the *Reig* Veda, the *Yajuſh* Veda, and the *Saman* Veda. The ſecond argument is drawn from the manifeſt difference in the ſtyle between the fourth or *Atharva* Veda and the three before named. [3] That of the latter is now grown ſo obſolete as hardly to be intelligible to the Brahmins of Benares, and to appear almoſt a different dialect of the Sanſcreet, while that of the former is comparatively modern, and may be eaſily read, even by a learner of that ſacred language, without the aid of a dictionary. I am entirely at a loſs, without ſome ſuch ſuppoſition, to account for the contradictions juſt mentioned, and many others in the Vedas; for, to enjoin a poſitive inſtitution in one page, and, in the next, to inſert precepts of a direct contrary tendency, in the important article of national religion, argues an inconſiſtency of which no intelligent Deity nor wiſe legiſlator could be guilty. Amidſt theſe contradictions therefore, for the ſake of conſiſtency, I am compelled to ſuppoſe the exiſtence of ſuch a circumſtance, or elſe ſome interpolation or mutilation of the Brahmins, who, like the Egyptian prieſts, kept thoſe

sacred books from the inspection of the vulgar, and altered the text, or explained its meaning, as they pleased. The just and benevolent parts I am willing to impute to Brahma, or that first wise legislator to whom we apply that fictitious name; and the arbitrary, the sanguinary, and the contradictory portions to less enlightened legislators, and to degenerate and mercenary priests, acting under their influence. The various detached pieces, of which this vast compendium of theology, ethics, and almost all the other sciences, consists, were collected together, we are informed, at a very ancient period, from every part of India, by a great and reputed philosopher of the name of VEIAS, who reduced them into their present form, and divided them into four distinct books, which are called the Vedas, or books of SCIENCE, for, that, according to Mr. Wilkins, is the proper signification of the word Veda. No regular translation of these books has yet appeared in any European language; but Sir William Jones has given it as his opinion, that the principal worship, inculcated throughout them, is that of *fire*, particularly the *solar fire*, and I trust I have fully proved that the practice of the Hindoos, under the plea of adoring God in that element, is even at this day

day very ſtrictly conformable to that doctrine. Sir William, in fact, goes beyond this point; for, in the diſcourſe on the literature of the Hindoos, he acquaints us, that "the author of the *Dabiſtan* deſcribes a race of old Perſian ſages, who appear, from the whole of his account, to have been Hindoos; that the book of *Menu*, ſaid to be written in a celeſtial dialect and alluded to by the author, means the Vedas, written in the Devanagari character;* and that, as Zeratuſht was only a reformer, in India may be diſcovered the true ſource of the Perſian religion." While I confeſs my readineſs to bow down to ſuch ſuperior authority, it is neceſſary I ſhould inform the reader, that moſt of the ancient Greek and Roman writers unite with Juſtin in placing the age, in which Zoroaſter lived, much higher in antiquity. Pliny,† in particular, mentions *a Zoroaſter*, who lived "ſex millibus annorum ante Platonis mortem;" ſo that probably there were many of that name; and thus both claſſical and oriental writers may have adhered to the truth in their various accounts. The above quotation from the Aſiatic Reſearches is of conſiderable importance in illuſtrating a ſubject, upon

* Aſiat. Reſearch. Vol. I. p 349.

† Plinii Nat Hiſt Lib. xxx C 1.

Warburton is decidedly for the high antiquity of *Zoroaſter*, and calls all that Prideaux, and conſequently Hyde, has written about

upon which I am, at length, about to enter; one of the moſt perplexing and difficult in the whole extent of Indian antiquities.

By way of introduction to it, let me remark, that the principal fire-temple, and the uſual reſidence of Zoroaſter and of his royal protector Darius Hyſtaſpes, was at Balkh,* the capital of Bactria, the moſt eaſtern province of Perſia, ſituated on the north-weſt frontiers of India, and not very remote from thoſe mountains, which, in Major Rennel's ſmall map, are diſtinguiſhed by the name of Hindoo-Ko, and which, in claſſic language, are the true Indian Caucaſus. Stationed ſo near the country of the venerable Brachmans, this bold and judicious reformer would hardly fail of viſiting thoſe renowned ſages, and of improving his own theological ſyſtem by the addition of whatever was valuable in the Brachmanian inſtitutes of religion. In reality, we are told, by one of the later hiſtorians of the Roman empire, that Hyſtaſpes† himſelf, and

about him, "an entertaining ſtory, a mere fable" Div. Leg. Vol. II p 9 ſecond edition.

* Hyde's Hiſt Relig Vet. Perſ cap. xxiv. p 320.

† Hyſtaſpes, qui quum ſuperioris Indiæ ſecreta fidentius penetraret, ad nemoroſam quandam venerat ſolitudinem, cujus tranquillis ſilentiis præcelſa Bracmanorum ingenia potiuntur; eorumque monitu rationes mundani motus et ſiderum, puroſque ſacrorum ritus, quantum colligere potuit, eruditus, ex his quæ

and moſt probably not unattended by the illuſtrious Archimagus, did perſonally penetrate into the ſecluded regions of upper India, and, in diſguiſe, viſited the deep ſolitudes of the foreſt, amidſt whoſe peaceful ſhades the Brachmans exerciſe their lofty genius in profound ſpeculations, and that he was there inſtructed by them in the principles of the mathematics, aſtronomy, and the pure rites of ſacrifice. Theſe various doctrines, to the utmoſt extent of their inclination to impart, and of his own abilities to retain, them, he afterwards taught the Magi, all which, together with the ſcience of divination, thoſe Magi traditionally delivered down to poſterity through a long ſucceſſion of ages. That part of India which Hyſtaſpes viſited was, doubtleſs, Caſhmeer, where, in all probability, the genuine religion of Brahma flouriſhed longeſt without adulteration, while its purity, in the ſouthern regions, could hardly fail of being polluted, and its ſpirit of degenerating, amidſt the continual influx of foreign nations and of exotic ſuperſtitions, from Egypt, Arabia, and all the neighbouring commercial nations.

quæ didicit, aliqua ſenſibus magorum infudit: quæ illi cum diſciplinis præſentiendi futura, per ſuam quiſque progeniem poſteris ætatibus tradunt. Ammiani Marcellini lib. 13.

But are there any vestiges remaining in this happy and secluded region of an original system of devotion, more refined, more benevolent, more consistent with the professed original principles of Brahma's benign religion, than exists any where else in India? If there should exist any such vestiges of the first legislator's genuine and sublime theology, will they not greatly corroborate the arguments I have advanced, principally on the authority of Sir William Jones, Mr. Wilkins, and Mr. Holwell, of the corruptions introduced into the ancient religion of India by subsequent legislators and designing priests of later ages? From the high and respectable authority of Abul Fazil, who, several times, visited, together with the emperor Akber, that delightful country, and therefore wrote not from the reports of others but as an eye-witness, I can answer that such vestiges actually *do exist there*. In the account which the Ayeen Akbery gives of Cashmeer, there is a very interesting relation inserted of a most amiable race of religious devotees, who are denominated REYSHEES,* and who are said to be the most respectable people of that country. These people, according to Abul

* See the account of them in the Ayeen Akbery, Vol. II. p. 115.

Abul Fazil, do not ſuffer themſelves to be fettered by traditions, they revile no ſect that may differ from them in religious opinions, nor do they meanly ſupplicate alms like the wandering mendicants of the South. They abſtain from all animal food; they devote their lives to unblemiſhed chaſtity; and they make it their conſtant and benevolent employment to plant the road with fruit-trees for the refreſhment of weary and fainting travellers. Now the word REYSHEE ſignifies in Sanſcreet, a holy perſon, and in the principles and conduct of theſe devotees, may ſurely be traced the mild, the beneficent, the uncorrupted, religion of the GREAT BRAHMA.

It may fairly be concluded, that Hyſtaſpes was incited, by the repreſentation of his friend and counſellor, Zoroaſter, to pay this private viſit to the Brachmans, and that Zoroaſter himſelf had frequently before viſited that "nemoroſam ſolitudinem" in which, Marcellinus informs us, they dwelt. It is a concluſion equally fair, that the latter zealouſly copied the manners and habits of living of thoſe whoſe auſterity and whoſe wiſdom he ſo ardently admired. When, therefore, we find Zoroaſter, as he is repreſented by Porphyry, in a paſſage which I ſhall preſently give at length, previ-

ously to his assuming the prophetic character, retiring to the gloom of a lonely CAVERN in Media, and ornamenting that cavern with various astronomical symbols and mathematical apparatus, displaying and imitating what he had there probably seen and been instructed in, " *Bracmanorum monitu, rationes mundani motus et siderum*," when we find him in Persia, reviving, with additional splendour, the ancient, but decayed, worship of the SUN and of FIRE; especially when, upon a more full *investigation of the matter, we discover in the* mountainous regions of India, which he visited, that the EXCAVATIONS were equally numerous and prodigious, and, in the very midst of those mountains, according to the express words of Abul Fazil,* who had, in all probability, personally examined them in his various excursions with Akber into that neighbourhood, that no less than "*twelve thousand recesses were cut out of the solid rock,* all ornamented with carving and plaster-work, and remarkable for three astonishing IDOLS; the first, representing a man eighty ells in height; the second, a woman fifty ells in height; and the third, a gigantic child fifteen ells in height:" when we read that in Cashmeer, after the defection

*Ayeen Akbery, in the Soobah of Cashmeer. Vol. II. p. 208.

fection of the inhabitants from their original simplicity and purity of worship, there were no less than "700 places where CARVED figures of a serpent," that ancient hieroglyphic emblem of the sun, were worshipped:—on a due consideration of all these circumstances united together, it is impossible to avoid supposing, that, at the period alluded to, the secret mysteries, both of the Hindoo religion and the Hindoo sciences, were performed and taught in the gloom of SUBTERRANEOUS retreats, hollowed for that purpose out of the ROCK, and decorated with similar sculptures and ornaments; that the mystic rites performed in them were those in honour of elemental FIRE, and that the prevailing religion of the nation was the worship of the SUN. This appears to me a more certain clue to guide us through the labyrinth into which we are entering than any other yet devised; and with this clue I shall proceed to the immediate consideration of those curious remains of ancient industry and genius, which have, through so many ages, excited the admiration of travellers, and exercised the speculations of the learned, in the neighbourhood of the English settlements at Bombay.

Ingenuity hath indeed been tortured, and conjecture exhausted, by endeavours to find out at what periods the stupendous caverns, at SALSETTE and at ELEPHANTA, were hewn from the native rock; the purposes to which they were originally devoted; and the meaning of the hieroglyphic figures sculptured on their walls. While some writers have imagined them to have been places of retreat and security from an invading enemy, others have considered them as the stony sanctuaries of a religion no longer existing; while others, again, with still less probability, have supposed them to have been the hallowed receptacles of the ashes of the more illustrious dead. English and French writers have equally exerted their critical acumen upon this abstruse subject; but both with success by no means proportionate to the labour bestowed in the investigation. M. Dancarville* is willing to ascribe them to Semiramis, when she invaded India, whose king, he says, opposed her at the head of elephants covered with mail, and of troops armed with lances, similar to those on the walls of Elephanta; and he quotes Diodorus Siculus to prove that she caused such memorials of herself to be constructed. According to

* Dancarville. Vol. I. p. 121, 124.

to Dr. Fryer, the firſt Engliſhman who gives any account of theſe caverns, the honour of excavating them has been contended for in favour of Alexander the Great by thoſe who thought his army alone equal to the atchievement of ſo arduous an undertaking; and it is not a little remarkable, that a large and ſpirited figure of a horſe, hewn out of the rock on the iſland of Elephanta, is really called the *horſe of Alexander.** The third opinion, and full as rational as any of thoſe beforementioned, is that which Ovington and other travellers aſſert the natives themſelves entertain concerning their fabrication; viz. that they were the work of giants and genii in the earlieſt ages of the world!

As theſe ſubterraneous receſſes are admitted to be of the moſt profound antiquity; of ſuch profound antiquity, indeed, that we are unable to obtain any light concerning the particular æra of their fabrication, either from books or from tradition: yet as there exiſts at the ſame time the ſtrongeſt reaſon for ſuppoſing them to have been originally applied to religious purpoſes: it ſeems to follow, as a

 neceſſary

* See the account communicated to the Society of Antiquaries, by Alexander Dalrymple, Eſq. in the Archæologia, Vol. VII, p. 324.

necessary consequence, that in them was practised the most ancient superstition known to have flourished in Hindostan, and that superstition has been demonstrated to have been the worship of the SOLAR ORB and of FIRE. But, with the principles of their theology, we have observed, were deeply blended those of a science which was in that remote period the inseparable concomitant of every theological system, and which, by some intelligent writers, is supposed to have had its origin, and, by all authors, to have arrived at early maturity, in that country. M. Bailly, indeed, in his elaborate treatise on the astronomy of the ancients, cedes the palm, contended for in honour of India, to Persia, but only for the space of about a century in priority; and, therefore, the general argument remains in force sufficient to justify my asserting, that the principles of that science were once investigated and taught in these caverns with all the zeal which inspired its most enthusiastic votaries, while the worship of the solar orb and of elementary fire was celebrated in them with all those peculiar appendages of pomp and solemnity, which ever *accompanied*, and, above all others, *distinguished*, that splendid superstition. Without anticipating the arguments,

ments, which I intend to adduce in ſupport of this aſſertion, I ſhall firſt preſent to the reader, as far as verbal deſcription can avail, (and ſorry am I that it is not in my power to accompany that deſcription with more than one explanatory engraving, which forms the frontiſpiece of this volume,) a general view of the caverns and of the ſculptures they contain. I ſhall afterwards proceed to that more particular examination of ſome of them, upon which I have founded certain conjectures concerning the uſe to which the former were applied, and concerning the probable meaning of the latter.

Theſe rocky ſhrines, the formation of which Mr. Groſe* ſuppoſes to have been a labour equal to that of erecting the pyramids of Egypt, are of various height, extent, and depth. They are partitioned out, by the labour of the hammer and the chiſſel, into many ſeparate chambers; and the roof, which in the pagoda of Elephanta is flat, but, in that of Salſette is arched, is ſupported by rows of pillars of great thickneſs, and arranged with much regularity. The walls are crouded with gigantic figures of men and women, engaged in various actions, and pourtrayed in various whimſical attitudes; and they are adorned with

* See Groſe's Voyage to the East-Indies, in 1750. P. 92.

with ſeveral evident ſymbols of the religion now prevailing in India. Above, as in a ſky, once probably adorned with gold and azure, in the ſame manner as Mr. Savary lately obſerved in the ruinous remains of ſome ancient Egyptian temples,* are ſeen floating the children of imagination, genii and dewtah, in multitudes; and along the cornice, in high relief, are the figures of elephants, horſes, and lions, executed with great accuracy. Two of the principal figures at Salſette are twenty-ſeven feet in height,† and of proportionate magnitude; the very buſt only of the triple-headed deity, in the grand pagoda of Elephanta, meaſures fifteen feet from the baſe to the top of the cap; while the face of another, if Mr. Groſe, who meaſured it, may be credited, is above five feet in length, and of correſponding breadth. Many of theſe figures, however, have been deeply injured by the fury of Mohammedan and Portugueſe invaders of Hindoſtan. When the latter firſt arrived in India, in their rage againſt idolatry they attempted

* See Savary's Letters on Egypt, vol. I. letter 30. and in p. 451 of the Engliſh edition, printed for Robinſon, in which the references to claſſic authors are more accurately made than even in the original French, and this, therefore, is the edition conſtantly referred to.

† See Archæologia. Vol. VII. p. 334.

tempted to annihilate what they thought were the objects of Pagan devotion, by plaftering over thefe valuable remains of antiquity: when the Marattas, afterwards, retook Salfette, to remove that plafter they fired off fome cannon in the pagoda, which unfortunately, together with the plafter, brought down fome of the bas-relief. Obferving this effect of the difcharge, they defifted, and with hammers cleared the figures of their degrading inveftment; but not without doing material injury to the hands and feet of feveral. The entrance into moft of thefe caverns is now obftructed by grafs and high reeds, which muft be burnt before a fecure paffage can be obtained; they are the refort of the cattle who feed upon that ifland when annoyed by the intenfe beams of the fun or wintry tempefts, and are not unfrequently vifited by wild beafts and venomous reptiles. Captain Hamilton acquaints us, that, upon his entrance into the pagoda of Elephanta,* he difcharged a piftol on purpofe to drive away thofe dangerous vifitants, and that, at the found, a huge ferpent, fifteen feet long and two feet thick, iffued from his dark recefs, which compelled him and his companions to make a precipitate retreat.

* Hamilton's Voyages to the Eaft-Ind. Vol. I. p. 238.

retreat. One would have ſuppoſed that the conſtruction of ſuch aſtoniſhing works, which have been called the eighth wonder of the world, would have fixed, in any country, an æra never to be forgotten, ſince not only a long period of years muſt have been conſumed, but an infinite number of hands muſt have been employed in ſcooping out from the living rock ſuch extenſive caverns, and forming, by the ſlow operation of the chiſſel, ſo many and ſuch maſſy columns. It is, however, very remarkable that no ſcrutiny however rigid, no enquiry however diligent, either among the neighbouring Brahmins or thoſe living upon the continent, celebrated for learning and penetration, could ever ſucceed in diſcovering the immediate ſovereign who fabricated them, nor the exact epoch of that fabrication.

Of the various deſcriptions of theſe excavations, all of which lie before me, from the firſt by Linſchoten in the ſixteenth century, to the lateſt publiſhed in the ſeventh volume of the Archæologia in 1785, thoſe given by Ovington and Mr. Hunter ſeem the moſt accurate among the Engliſh travellers, and thoſe of M. Anquetil de Perron and M. Niebuhr among the foreign viſitants,

visitants. From these authors principally, but with occasional references to others, is the following more particular account of them selected. Let us begin with Elephanta.

Ovington informs us, that Elephanta* is a small island, three leagues distant from Bombay, and is thus denominated from the statue of a large elephant cut out of the rock, of which the island is composed, conspicuously standing on the south shore, and which, in the opinion of another traveller,† (Hamilton,) so nearly resembles a real elephant, that, at the distance of two hundred yards, "a sharp eye might be deceived by the similitude." Ovington also describes a horse, carved in the same rock, "so lively, and with such a colour and carriage, that many have fancied it a living animal." An engraving of each is given in the volume of the Archæologia‡ cited above; but the elephant, according to Mr. Hunter, a more accurate inspector of things, is split in two, and there are visible marks of its having been done by gunpowder, probably by the same barbarians who mutilated the figures in the pagoda adjoining. The word pagoda is formed from the Persian word *pout*, signifying idol,

* Elephanta, according to De Perron, is called by the natives, Gallipouri.

† Hamilton, Vol. I. 241. ‡ Archæologia. Vol. VII. 287.

idol, and *ghada*, temple. Thus pagoda means a temple of idols, and, through this interpretation, we come immediately at the meaning of the hieroglyphics.

This aſtoniſhing PANTHEON of the Gods, that is, of the *deified heroes and princes of India*, preſents itſelf about half way up the ſteep aſcent of the mountain, from whoſe ſtony boſom it is excavated. Ovington ſtates the dimenſions of this temple at about 120 feet ſquare, and the height at 18 feet, and Niebuhr* agrees with Ovington in reſpect to the height and breadth. The principal entrance is from the north. The enormous maſs of ſolid rock above is ſupported by four rows of pillars of beautiful proportion, but of an order in architecture totally different from that of Greece and Rome. Each column ſtands upon a ſquare pedeſtal, and is finely fluted, but, inſtead of being cylindrical, gradually bulges out towards the center. The capital is alſo fluted, and is deſcribed by Mr. Hunter as having the appearance of a cuſhion preſſed flat by the weight of the ſuperincumbent mountain. Over the tops of theſe columns there runs a ridge cut out of the rock, reſembling a beam, about a foot in thickneſs, richly adorned with carved work. Along the ſides of the cavern are ranged thoſe coloſſal

ſtatues

* Sa longeur eſt d'environ 120 pieds, et ſa largeur à peu près de même. Voyage en Arabie, tome ii. p 25.

ſtatues before-mentioned, Overton ſays, to the number of forty or fifty, each of them twelve or fifteen feet in height, of very exact ſymmetry, and, although they are as round and prominent as the life, yet none of them are entirely detached from the main rock. Some of theſe figures have on their heads a kind of helmet of a pyramidal form; others wear crowns rich in devices, and ſplendidly decorated with jewels, while others diſplay only large buſhy ringlets of curled or flowing hair.* Many of them have four hands, many have ſix, and in thoſe hands they graſp ſcepters and ſhields; the ſymbols of juſtice and the enſigns of religion; the weapons of war, and the trophies of peace. Some of them have aſpects that inſpire the beholder with terror, and, in the words of Linſchoten, are diſtorted into ſuch "horrible and fearfull formes that they make a man's hayre ſtand upright," others are diſtinguiſhed by a placid ſerenity and benignity of countenance; and others betray evident marks of deep dejection and inward anguiſh. The more conſpicuous figures are all gorgeouſly arrayed after the Indian faſhion, with heavy jewels

* Niebuhr has ſtarted rather a ſingular idea upon this ſubject. "On pourroit prendre pour une perruque ce que l'une d'elles a ſur la tete, et conclûre de là, que les Européens ne ſont pas les premiers inventeurs de cette coeffure." Voyage en Arabie, tome ii. p. 29.

jewels in their ears, with ſuperb collars of precious ſtones, with belts ſumptuouſly wrought; and with rich bracelets on their arms and wriſts. To enter, however, upon a particular deſcription of each figure falls not within the compaſs either of my intention or of my abilities: the attempt, if practicable, would far exceed the limits within which I have profeſſed to circumſcribe the hiſtory itſelf. I ſhall confine my obſervations therefore to two or three of them, which, being more ſtrikingly prominent, particularly attract our notice, and merit more attentive examination.

The firſt of theſe is that enormous buſt, which is ſituated on the ſouth ſide, and directly faces the main entrance of the cave. Mr. Hunter deſcribes this buſt as having four heads joined behind the ears; one preſenting itſelf full in front, two in profile, and the fourth concealed from the view by its ſituation behind that in front. This, however, is an aſſertion directly contrary to every account I have yet ſeen except Mr. Hamilton's, whoſe obſervations the ſerpent's appearance prevented from being very correct; and if Mr. Hunter exerted, in this inſtance, his uſual accuracy of examination, it is a circumſtance of great perplexity. M. Niebuhr, however,

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the moſt faithful delineator of theſe antiquities, mentions but three heads, and particularly ſpecifies this buſt* as exhibiting the repreſentation of the grand triple deity, of India, Brahma, Veeſhnu, and Seeva. I conſider the judgement of Niebuhr as corroborated in the higheſt degree even by Mr. Hunter's own deſcription of the ſymbols and aſpect of the three perſonages who compoſe it. Let us, however, firſt conſider his account of the dimenſions of the auguſt viſage in the front. We ſhall ſoon perceive, from its aſtoniſhing depth and breadth, that it was intended for the image of the ſupreme preſiding deity of this hallowed retreat, and that the ſculptor wiſhed to impreſs us, by the ſuperior magnitude of the *buſt only*, with the moſt awful conceptions of his unrivalled pre-eminence in every other point of view. The face in the front meaſures above five feet in length, and the noſe, alone, one foot and an half; the width, from the ear only to the middle of the noſe, is three feet four inches; but the ſtupendous breadth of the whole figure, between the ſhoulders, expands near twenty feet. The towering

* Cette figure principale eſt un Buſte A TROIS TETES, qui apparemment devra repréſenter, *Brahma*, *Viſtnu*, et *Madeo*, ou quelqu'autre divinite, à l'honneur de laquelle on ait bâti ce temple. Voyage en Arabie, tome ii. p. 26.

ering pyramidal cap of this central head has, in front, a very large jewel; and the caps themſelves of all the three are exquiſitely wrought. Round the neck of the ſame figure is ſuſpended a moſt magnificent broad collar, compoſed of precious ſtones and pearls. This face, Mr. Hunter adds, has a drowſy but placid appearance, which may be ſuppoſed the exact deſcription of that abſorbed ſtate which, it has been before remarked, conſtitutes the ſupreme felicity of the Indian deity. The amiable attribute of the preſerver, Veeſhnu, is doubtleſs intended to be repreſented by the face on the right, which is arrayed in ſmiles, and looks enamoured on a bunch of flowers, perhaps the ſacred Lotos, which its left hand holds up to view. If ever, on the other hand, the dreadful attributes of the deſtroying god, Mahadeo, were accurately pourtrayed, are they not evident in the monſtrous, diſtorted, and terrific, features of the remaining aſpect? The eye-brows of that face are contracted into frowns, the ſkin of the noſe is drawn upwards and the *alce noſtri* diſtended, expreſſing contempt and indignation. The face, too, is darkened by whiſkers, which the others have not, and the tongue is violently thruſt out between the teeth. The right hand of this dreadful figure graſps a large hooded

hooded ſnake which it holds aloft and ſurveys with a ſtern look. The ſnake is about a foot in thickneſs; and the middle finger of the hand, which graſps it, Mr. Hunter aſſerts to be three feet and a half in length. Another hand, which is now broken off, appears to have had a ſnake of the ſame hooded and enormous kind. If, upon future and more accurate examination, this ſhould be diſcovered to be a quadruple-faced divinity, in that caſe to whom can it poſſibly point, but to BRAHMA himſelf, THE GREAT ONE, who in the Aſiatic Reſearches* is repreſented with four majeſtic aſpects; as the god who not only knows, but obſerves all things. If the reader will trouble himſelf to look into the fourth and ſixth plate† of Niebuhr, he will obſerve two figures, decorated in a very conſpicuous manner with the Zenar, or ſacred cord of three threads, which the Brahmins wear, and this circumſtance, added to what has been juſt aſſerted, is a ſufficient refutation of that ill founded opinion of Mr. Groſe, and other ſuperficial obſervers, that the ſpecies of devotion, now prevailing in Hindoſtan, was different from that originally practiſed in the Pagoda of Elephanta.

* See an engraving of Brahma in the Aſiat. Reſearches, vol. i. p. 243. † Oppoſite pages, 25 and 27.

If the head of this buſt, however, ſhould, on farther enquiry, prove to be of a quadruple form, the argument will by no means be overſet; for, both in plate the fifth, and in the ſixth, adjoining to the elephant's head, the triple divinity is clearly ſeen, ſeated on a throne ornamented with geeſe; the favourite birds of Sariſwatty, the wife of Brahma. The elephant's head had, moſt probably, the now-effaced body of Ganeſa affixed to it; for, thus is that body ornamented in the engraving of that deity in the Aſiatic Reſearches, to which the reader may advert; and it was judiciouſly placed near the ſupreme Being, ſince, both in that authentic volume, and in Holwell*, we find that it was the peculiar office of Ganeſa to preſent to the Deity all the oblations, and all the devout addreſſes of mankind to their Creator. The elephant's head is the emblem of ſagacity, and he is ſtyled the god of prudence and policy. Hence even worldly buſineſs of any importance is always commenced by an ejaculation to Ganeſa, and he is invoked at the beginning of moſt Indian books, an inſtance of which occurs in the Heetopades, tranſlated by Mr. Wilkins, which opens with,

* See Aſiat. Reſearches, vol. 1. 227 and Holwell, ſecond part, 142.

Reverence to Ganesa. The two majestic whole-length figures, on each side of the grand bust, are both adorned with the thread of Brahma, and are probably intended to represent the priests of that deity. M. Anquetil de Perron, I observe, calls them subdars.

In a temple of Indian deities who would have expected to have found AN AMAZON? Yet, farther on to the left of the said bust, amidst a groupe of thirty uncouth statues, conspicuously projects one to whom most writers, and, among them, both Niebuhr* and Hunter, have united in giving that name; and truly she *is an Amazon*, if the general derivation of that word be just,† for, she has no right breast at all, while the left is very large and globular. She has four arms; the right fore-arm rests upon the head of a bull, the left fore-arm hangs down; but what the hand once contained is mutilated, and cannot now be distinguished. The hand of the hinder right-arm grasps a hooded snake; the left, a round shield, regularly convex on the outside, which

 the

* La figure principale de cette groupe est une femme, qui n'a qu'une mammelle, et qui, peut-être, doit representer *une Amazone*, p. 27.

† Amazon is supposed to be formed from the privative α and μαζος, mamma, or breast; for, they used to cut off the right breast of the female.

the ſtatue turns towards itſelf. As we have exploded the idea of Semiramis having conſtructed theſe caverns, from what quarter could the idea of a figure, like this, enter the head of an Indian ſculptor? Herodotus acquaints us, that there were *Scythian Amazons*; and, however chymerical the ſyſtem may appear, I cannot but ſuſpect that it aroſe from that connection, which, in very early periods, ſeems to have exiſted between the two nations of India and Scythia. Mr. Bryant has indeed combated all the aſſertions of the ancients concerning the exiſtence of ſo extraordinary a race; he inſiſts that the people, called Amazons, were Cuthite colonies from Egypt and Syria; and, in corroboration of his aſſertions*, has offered an ingenious derivation of the word *Amazon*, which he would deduce from *Zon*, the Sun; the national object of worſhip among that people. Allowing this derivation of the word *Amazon* to be founded in propriety, her leaning upon the head of a bull, the animal ſacred to the Sun, will appear peculiarly juſt and characteriſtic; while the various crowd of mutilated figures around may be ſuppoſed in the attitudes of devotion, and adorned with the implements of ſacrifice. The whole, however,

* Analyſis of Ancient Mythology, vol. iii. p 463.

ever, is an enigma, whoſe real meaning, from the general mutilation prevailing throughout the figures, will never probably be ſolved.

In the pagoda of Elephanta there is another very ſingular and portentous figure, which forcibly arreſts the attention of every obſerver. Its features are diſtorted and furious, like thoſe of Mahadeo before deſcribed; and its limbs are carved in a gigantic ſtyle. The mouth is wide open; and the whole aſpect is inexpreſſibly ſavage and terrible. This monſtrous ſtatue has eight arms, only ſix of which are perfect. The two uppermoſt of thoſe that remain are extended to their full length, and, over its head, ſupport a wide curtain, or canopy, upon which are ſculptured various figures, in a poſture of adoration. One of the right hands graſps a drawn ſabre; the other ſuſtains by the thigh an affrighted infant, with the head hanging downwards, whom the relentleſs monſter ſeems about to deſtroy. We are informed, as well by M. Niebuhr as Mr. Hunter, that from this circumſtance many travellers have fancied this piece of mythologic ſculpture to have been intended for a repreſentation of the judgement of Solomon; a conjecture, however, which they both conſider as totally deſtitute of foundation. Of the two

left hands, the uppermoſt is charged with a bell, which, ſays Mr. Hunter, is known to be an inſtrument conſtantly uſed in the religious ceremonies of the Gentoos; and the inferior ſupports what Niebuhr* thinks a baſon to catch the blood of the murdered infant, but what Mr. Hunter affirms,† at the time of his viſit to Elephanta, actually contained the mutilated figure of a child, with its face averted from the larger figure, and exceedingly bent; ſo that the head, which it now wants, muſt, when joined to the body, have hung back very low, and have exhibited a frightful ſpectacle. The ſtatue is gorgeouſly dreadful, with a rich collar of pearl, and bracelets of precious ſtones to every arm, and is encircled with a chain of *death-heads*, which evidently point out to us once more the deſtroying power of India, and the huſband of that CALLEE, the wild muſic of whoſe prieſts, at one of her feſtivals, brought inſtantly to the recollection of Sir William Jones the *Scythian* meaſures‡ of Diana's adorers in the ſplendid opera of Iphigenia in Tauris, exhibited by Gluck in Paris. Above and below this coloſſal ſtatue are ſeveral ſmaller figures, all of whom have

* Le plat devroit ſignifier, qu'il y a reçu le ſang des enfans maſſacres. P. 30

† In Archæol. vii. 194.

‡ Aſiat. Reſ. vol. i. p. 266.

have horror ſtrikingly painted upon their countenances. To conclude the diſguſting ſimilitude, the veil, or canopy, in which the ſtatue ſeems to conceal itſelf from view, may, with juſtice, be conſidered as figurative, not only of the gloomy and ferocious nature of the rites peculiar to that vindictive deity, but of the awful ſeaſon in which they were performed; the darkneſs of that night which, Mr. Holwell has informed us, is univerſally devoted to the worſhip of Callee throughout Hindoſtan.

If the ſacred *zenar* of Brahma, conſpicuous upon ſo many of the figures engraved in the plates of Niebuhr, and the Archæologia; if theſe ſtriking ſculptures of the gods, at preſent adored in India; if the poſitive aſſertion of Niebuhr * that he himſelf ſaw the iſlanders come and pay their devoirs to the deities of this temple; will not convince thoſe of their error, who inſiſt † that a ſpecies of devotion, totally different from that at this day prevailing in India, was anciently practiſed in theſe caverns, let us enter, and ſurvey the ſecret ſanctuary of this magnificent temple, and let us examine

* Voy. en Arab. Tom. ii. p. 32.

† Mr. Groſe, who viſited this part of India in 1750, with equal preſumption and ignorance aſſerts that theſe ſculptures "bear not the leaſt ſhadow of alluſion to the hiſtory, manners, "or worſhip of the Gentoos."—*Groſe's* Voyage to the Eaſt-Indies, p. 97.

examine what internal evidence that ſurvey may afford to determine the queſtion.

Previouſly to that ſurvey, however, it is neceſſary that the reader ſhould be acquainted with another predominant feature in the Hindoo religion, upon which I have not as yet touched, becauſe, in the firſt place, the ſubject is not the moſt inviting, and, in the ſecond place, becauſe it does not appear to have any foundation in the original Vedas attributed to Brahma, which, throughout, inculcate a reverence for FIRE, as the pureſt ſymbol of the divinity in the whole extended circle of nature. Imaginations leſs pure have conceived, and prieſts leſs abſorbed in mental abſtraction, have elevated in the very temples of India, a very groſs repreſentation of the great celeſtial Δημιουργος: they have inſtituted a ſpecies of devotion at once degrading to the Creator, and diſhonourable to his creatures. This ſpecies of devotion made an early and rapid progreſs among the inferior caſts, but particularly infected the inhabitants of the peninſula, whoſe manners, like the conſtitution of people ſituated in warmer climates, ſeem to have been ſooner relaxed and depraved than thoſe of their brethren in the northern and leſs enervating regions of Upper India.

I will not affirm, though it is far from being improbable, that these indecent rites were imported into that peninsula from Egypt, where the first institution of the worship of *Ithiphallic* images* is asserted, by Diodorus Siculus, to have taken place upon an occasion which I shall hereafter explain, and whence, Herodotus† acquaints us, those rites were carried by Melampus into Greece. For the present, I shall content myself with informing the reader, on the authority of Mr. FORSTER, who has written a concise but elegant treatise concerning the mythology of the Hindoos, that all the numerous sects, into which they are divided, are ultimately included under two grand divisions; the one denominated the *Veeshnu Bukht*, and the other the *Seeva Bukht*. The followers of the first, Mr. Forster says,‡ are distinguished by marking the forehead with a longitudinal, and

* Diod Sic. lib i p. 15

† Herodot lib ii. p 123.

‡ This valuable little book is entitled, SKETCHES OF THE MYTHOLOGY AND CUSTOMS OF THE HINDOOS, and was obligingly lent me, with some other original publications of an Indian kind, by the secretary of the East-India Company. It was printed in 1785, but never published. A publication has lately appeared under a similar title, but on a more extensive scale, by Mr. Crauford, an elegant and authentic writer, whose observations are, in general, the result of personal investigation upon the spot.

and thoſe of the ſecond with a parallel, line. As in the great temple of JAGGERNAUT, in Oriſſa, all diſtinctions were laid aſide, and devotees of every caſt, though at other times ſtrictly prohibited from eating together, were permitted to take their food in common: ſo it is not improbable that, at ELEPHANTA, the two great ſects, diſtinguiſhed by the name of Veeſhnu and Seeva, might forget their accuſtomed animoſity, and worſhip their ſeveral deities with equal fervour.

At the weſt end of this grand pagoda is a dark receſs, or SACELLUM, twenty feet ſquare, totally deſtitute of any external ornament, except the altar in the centre, and thoſe gigantic figures which guard the four ſeveral doors that lead into it. Theſe figures, according to Niebuhr, are naked, are eight in number, ſtationed on each ſide of every door, and are of the enormous height of thirteen feet and a half; they are all finely ſculptured in high relief, and appear as if ſtarting from the wall to which they are attached. Their heads are decorated in a manner ſimilar to the other ſtatues: they have rich collars round their necks, and jewels of a vaſt ſize in their ears. Of the ſtriking attitude of one of thoſe ſtatues, which remains moſt entire, Mr. Hunter has recorded

recorded the following particulars: that the whole weight of the figure ſeems to reſt upon the right leg, while the knee of the left is ſomewhat bent, the right humerus hangs downward parallel to the body, and the fore-arm is bent in ſuch a manner that the hand is oppoſite to the navel, the palm is turned upwards and ſuſtains a GLOBE, and the fingers are bent backwards in a ſtyle that admirably repreſents, or rather makes the ſpectator *feel*, the weight of the ponderous body they ſupport. He adds a judicious remark, that the people, whoever they were, that carved theſe figures, muſt have made conſiderable progreſs in the art of ſtatuary, ſo accurately to have obſerved, and ſo ſucceſsfully to have expreſſed, as in many inſtances they have, the alteration which the form of the limbs undergoes from muſcular action and external impulſe, as well as the various effects of mental ſenſation upon the human countenance. Theſe formidable guardians of this ſacred receſs point out the uſe to which it was applied, and the veneration in which it was holden. It was devoted to the moſt ſacred myſteries of their religion; but our pity and abhorrence are at once excited by the emblem under which they repreſented, in this receſs, the ſupreme

preme Creator. It is indeed an emblem of deity, which was common in the ancient ages of the world, and which, it has been obferved,* is but too vifible at this day in the various pagodas and paintings of Hindoftan. It is, in fhort, the Φαλλος of the Greeks, the PRIAPUS of the Romans, and in India it is called the LINGAM divinity, by which they mean to exprefs the power of the firft creative energy, by whofe operations all nature is produced. According to M. Sonnerat,† the profeffors of this worfhip were of the pureft principles and the moft unblemifhed conduct; and, however offenfive the idea may prove to Europeans, happily educated under different impreffions, it feems never to have entered into the heads of the Indian legiflator and people, that any thing natural could be grofly obfcene, "a fingularity," obferves Sir W. Jones, "which pervades all their writings and converfation, but which is no proof of depravity in their morals!"

A fear of offending the delicacy of my readers would induce me to decline faying a word more on the fubject of a devotion, at which modefty cannot help revolting; but as, in

* Afiatic Refearches, vol. i. 1254.

† Sonnerat, Voy. aux Indes Orient. Vol. i p. 118.

in obedience to the ſtern mandates of truth, I am reluctantly compelled to give the particular of this receſs, the real purpoſe of which, and the kind of devotion practiſed in it, Mr. Hunter,* from his calling the altar a *mauſoleum*, ſeems not even to have conjectured, I ſhall take the liberty of relating thoſe particulars in the words of Mr. Dalrymple: that account, extracted by Mr. D. from the journal of Capt. Pyke, obſerves that, " all within was open and plain, except that in the center ſtood a ſquare low altar, on which was placed a large poliſhed ſtone of a cylindrical form, ſtanding on its baſe, but the top was round or convex." Metaphyſics and Mythology, united together, at once formed the hypotheſis and fabricated the repreſentative emblem. An attentive ſurvey of the powers of nature and her various modes of operation, originally gave birth to that hypotheſis; for, according to the philoſophy of India, " to *deſtroy* is only to *generate* and *reproduce* in another way." Hence the god of deſtruction in this country is holden to preſide over generation, as a ſymbol of which he rides upon a white bull. The name and the various attributes of MAHADEO juſtify our denominating him at once the Magnus Divus, (which is the literal

* Archæol. vol. vii. p. 325.

literal tranflation of Mahadeo,) the Jupiter Ultor and the Jupiter Genitor of the Hindoos. His confort is Bhavanee, the Indian Venus, and, in truth, fhe has produced as many fubordinate deities in India as ever Venus did in Greece or Rome. It may here be remarked, that all the Indian deities have wives; by which, when the characters are purely mythological, we are to underftand the active powers of their lords; but SEETA, the wife of the great incarnate god RAM, whofe unfortunate adventures during her captivity by the giant RAVAN, king of Lanca, engrofs fo large a fhare of the paintings and ancient hiftorical poems of Hindoftan, was probably a real perfonage, the wife of a rajah of the fame name, after his death dignified with divinity for the bravery of his exploits againft the domeftic tyrants and foreign invaders of his country.

In metaphyfical fpeculation alone, I have obferved, it is poffible to account for the ftrange fpecies of devotion above mentioned, and that ftill ftranger reprefentation of deity; but it is equally poffible, that they might have originated in the perverted principles of a mind depraved by fenfual gratifications, and that the argument, ufed in the defence of them,

them, might be poſterior to the eſtabliſhment of the ſuperſtition. Reluctant as I am to appear to follow the example of thoſe who labour to deduce from Egypt every ancient inexplicable cuſtom and every obſcure religious rite of India, yet, of this ſuperſtition at leaſt, ſo diametrically oppoſite to the tenor of the Vedas, and ſo directly congenial with the ITHIPHALLIC rites of Egypt, which in ſucceeding ages were ſo widely diffuſed throughout the earth, I am inclined to think thoſe rites were the grand prototype. The early annals of the latter country record the circumſtances that gave riſe to the inſtitution; and, however deeply blended thoſe circumſtances were with their mythologic fables, yet, in an inveſtigation of this nature, it would be improper wholly to omit taking notice of them.

Diodorus Siculus* then relates, that OSIRIS, after his return from the conqueſt of Aſia, was ſlain by his jealous and enraged brother Typhon, who, after cutting the mangled body into twenty-ſix pieces, diſperſed them in various parts of Egypt. ISIS, his affectionate queen, diligently ſought for the diſperſed limbs, which, after a long ſearch ſhe found, and committed to the care of the prieſts, in-

* Diodori Siculi, lib. i. p. 15.

ftituting at the fame time facred rites in honour of her murdered lord. In memory of this eager and tedious fearch of the difconfolate queen, at every celebration of the myftic rites of Ifis and Ofiris, a fimilar fearch, with many and bitter lamentations, was affected to be made by the priefts, and hence that expreffion of "Nunquam fatis quæfitus Ofiris." Not all the anxious inquiry of Ifis, however, could for a long time difcover the genitals of Ofiris, which Typhon had thrown into the Nile. At length the portion of Ofiris miffing was found, interred with the utmoft folemnity, and, in memory of this recovery, Phalli, or poles, (for, that is the meaning of the word Phalli,) with figures of the male pudenda faftened to them, were conftructed, and ever after carried about in folemn proceffion during the continuance of the feftival. Athenæus acquaints us*, that Ptolemy Philadelphus, at one of thofe magnificent feftivals, difplayed to the Egyptians a Phallus of gold, richly painted and adorned with golden crowns, a hundred and twenty cubits in length, with a ftar of burnifhed gold upon the top, the circumference of which was fix cubits. This was borne aloft,

* Athenæi, lib. v. c. 5.

aloft, like the other idols, on a ſplendid car; and, like them, received homage from the gazing crowd. This atrocious outrage againſt decency, this abominable mockery of every thing ſacred, under the inſulted name of religion, from Egypt ſpread its infection through all the kingdoms of Aſia, and was carried in Greece to ſuch a pitch of infamous refinement, that, in celebrating the orgies of Bacchus, according to Herodotus*, they fabricated certain obſcene images, a cubit in height, ſo artificially contrived with nerves, that the αἰδοῖον, equal in magnitude to the reſt of the body, might be moved at pleaſure, and theſe images the women (thoſe ſhameleſs φαλλοφεροι) carried about in proceſſion, ſinging all the time the praiſes of Bacchus, and dancing to the ſound of the flute. He then adds, that it was Melampus who firſt introduced among the Greeks the ſacrifices in honour of Bacchus, the pomp of the Phallus, and all the other ceremonies of that Egyptian ſuperſtition. The veſtiges of this ancient and nefarious idolatry are evidently traced in the worſhip of BAAL-PEOR, ſo frequently and loudly inveighed againſt by the prophets in various parts of the ſacred writings. The word *Baal-*

* Herodoti, lib. ii. p. 122.

Peor is, according to Biſhop Cumberland, derived from two Chaldee primitives, the former ſignifying *God*, and PEOR, or PAYAR, *denudare*, which he would literally tranſlate the god PRIAPUS*, that obſcene deity, born and venerated at Lampſacus, whence he is often ſo denominated, and concerning whoſe hiſtory and office the reader, if he chooſes, may conſult Horace,† Ovid, and the other licentious Roman poets.

I am unwilling to dwell upon this indelicate topic, which however is intimately connected with the ſubject of which I treat; but there appears to be ſo ſtriking a reſemblance between a paſſage in a profane writer ‡, who relates the cauſe of the firſt inſtitution of the feſtival, called PHALLICA, at Athens, and one in the ſacred volumes, that the curious reader will, I am confident, pardon the protraction, eſpecially as I ſhall afterwards prove, that a cuſtom, ſimilar to that alluded to, at this day exiſts in India. Pegaſus, a native of Eleutheris, in Bœotia, having brought to Athens ſome ſtatues of Bacchus, was treated by the Athenians

* Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 75.

† Hor. lib. i. Sat. viii. v. 3.

‡ For an account of the eſtabliſhment of the Phallica, ſee the "Acharnenſes" of Ariſtophanes, act. ii. ſc. i. and the Scholiaſt upon the paſſage.

Athenians with the utmoſt contempt and ridicule. The deity, indignant at the inſult, in revenge, ſent among them an epidemic diſeaſe of a nature that peculiarly affected thoſe parts which modeſty forbids to name. On conſulting the oracle upon the beſt method of preventing the farther extenſion of ſo grievous a malady, they were recommended publicly to receive Bacchus into their city in all the pomp of his worſhip. The oracle was obeyed, and, amidſt other ſplendid trophies, to appeaſe the incenſed divinity, were diſplayed THYRSI, with the figures of the parts affected bound to the end of them. The great critic, M. Bochart, and our Biſhop Patrick* after him, aſſert the whole of this relation to be a direct forgery from a paſſage in Samuel, where the Philiſtines, having taken and violated the *ark of the God of Iſrael*, are ſmitten with emerods, a diſtemper, concerning the exact nature of which the commentators are not fully agreed, but which, from the text of verſe 9, was doubtleſs of a ſimilar nature with that before-mentioned. On enquiry of the prieſts, with what treſpaſs-offering the God of Iſrael might be appeaſed, they are deſired, among

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* See Bochart's Canaan, lib. i. cap. 18 Biſhop Patrick's Commentary on Sam. I, cap. vi. ver. 1

other things, to prepare five golden emerods, according to the number of the principal cities of Philiſtia, and dedicate them to the God of Iſrael; which mandate when they had obeyed, the diſtemper ceaſed to make farther ravages among them. The ſimilarity in theſe two accounts is ſingularly ſtriking; but there ſeems to be no neceſſity that the one ſhould be a forgery from the other, as thoſe learned gentlemen have aſſerted, eſpecially ſince it is acknowledged by both, that the ancient Heathens conſecrated to their gods ſuch memorials of their deliverance as beſt repreſented the evils from which they were liberated; and, in fact, among the Hindoos, according to Tavernier, it is a cuſtom at this day, that, when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any diſeaſe, he ſhould bring the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, ſilver, or copper, according to his rank and ability, as an offering to the god.* But what the reader will probably think ſtill more ſingular is, that the worſhip of the Lingam God is attempted to be explained in the very ſame way by an Hindoo writer, quoted in the SKETCHES, publiſhed by Mr. Crawford, which the reader may ſee there at length, and of which

* See Voyage aux Indes par T. B. Tavernier, tome iii, p. 227. Edit. à Rouen, 1713.

which the following is only the outline, viz. That Seevah, incenſed againſt a certain race of devotees, who, under the external appearance of ſanctity and auſterity, practiſed ſecretly the moſt infamous vices, deſcended from heaven to puniſh and expoſe the hypocritic race. The event was, that, their impiety being as bold as their hypocriſy was baſe, they attempted to cope with the god of terrors, and by horrible incantations produced a tiger, whoſe mouth expanded like a cavern, and whoſe voice reſembled thunder, which they ſent againſt the god, who ſlew the monſter with one blow of his club, and then, like another Hercules, covered himſelf with his ſkin. Every other effort to revenge themſelves upon Seevah failing, they, by the ſufferance of heaven, ſent a conſuming fire to deſtroy the genitals of that god, who, we have ſeen, is the ſupreme regenerative power of nature. " Seevah, enraged at this attempt, turned the fire with indignation againſt the human race, and mankind would ſoon have been deſtroyed, had not the preſerver Veeſhnu, alarmed at the danger, implored him to ſuſpend his wrath. At his intreaties Seevah relented. But it was ordained, that, in his temples, thoſe parts ſhould be worſhipped, which the falſe devotees had im-

 piouſly

piously attempted to destroy."* This story is an evident compound of allegory and metaphysics, as are all those of Egyptian origin that relate to this curious worship. In fact, the pride of the philosopher would fain explain away, by argument, the grossness of a devotion so degrading to the dignity of human nature. While I again assert my belief, that it came from Egypt to India, I at the same time declare my conviction, that it originally flowed neither from Seevah, nor Osiris, nor any other fabulous divinity, but from that abandoned HAM, the JUPITER HAMMON of the Egyptians, their first god and first monarch, from whom the whole country in Scripture is often denominated the land of Ham; from that Ham, who, according to the sense of the word PEOR, above mentioned, was guilty of the horrible enormity of exposing and deriding the nakedness of an aged father, and the base rites of whose prostituted religion are, by the just decrees of providence, stamped with that eternal brand of reproach, that HIEROGLYPHIC SYMBOL of his crime, which is so well calculated to impress upon the minds of men, and keep alive the memory of that primæval turpitude committed by the most ancient

* SKETCHES relating to the Customs of the Hindoos, p. 177.

ancient idolater and the earliest tyrant after the deluge.

I shall now proceed with the reader to take a general view of the more numerous, and not less astonishing, excavations of CANARAH, in the island of SALSETTE. SALSETTE is a large and fertile island, separated from BOMBAY by only a narrow channel, and is seventy miles in circumference, twenty in length, and fifteen in breadth. Of these excavations the most recent and authentic accounts are to be found in the same volume of the Archæologia above referred to, extracted by Mr. Lethieullier from the papers of Charles Boon, Esq. governor of Bombay, and in the preliminary discourse of M. Anquetil de Perron to his famous Zend-avesta. The relations of these gentlemen will be our safest guide amidst a labyrinth of mythology, where we shall not have the advantage of M. Niebuhr's accurate and explanatory engravings. M. Niebuhr, when in India, was deterred, as he himself informs us, from visiting Salsette, which was at that period in the hands of the Marattas, by some differences which had recently arisen between the English and that nation.

Governor Boon, laudably employing the power which he derived from his high station

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to promote the purposes of knowledge, ordered exact drawings to be made, upon the spot, of the principal pagodas and of the more striking figures on this island. These drawings were seven in number, but were never made public; they formed part of the collection of Mr. Lethieullier, and on that gentleman's decease were purchased for the additional enrichment of the private library of the king; a library, which, for the number of scarce and valuable books and manuscripts it contains, cannot be rivalled by that of any sovereign in Europe, and may be called truly royal. I have denominated these excavations numerous and astonishing; and so the reader will undoubtedly think them, when he is informed, that, according to the representation of Gemelli Careri, who distinctly enumerates them, the figures of idols alone amounted to above six hundred in number, ninety of them in and about the great pagoda, which he tells us may be esteemed the greatest wonder of Asia; and adds, that the person, who took the draughts for Governor Boon, declared he was so struck with the magnitude of that stupendous work, that, " when he attentively considered the whole, he did not doubt but it must

muſt have coſt the labour of forty thouſand men for forty years together.*"

Near the center of the iſland, and emboſomed in extenſive woods, which are the haunt of lions, tigers, and other wild and venomous animals, riſe four very ſteep and contiguous hills, exhibiting at a diſtance the aſpect of one entire rock, and bearing on their ſurface ſtrong marks of calcination.* It is on the ſides of theſe hills that the caverns are hewn, and, from the reſemblance of the whole to a vaſt city of ſtone, as well as from the village of Canarah adjoining, the excavations are denominated, by the natives, "the city of Canarah."† With this reſemblance, Linſchotten, who paid this iſland a viſit at ſo early a period as the year 1579, was ſo ſtruck, that, throughout his relation, he talks of it as of a town, and calls the excavated apartments *chambers* and *houſes*. He deſcribes the front as carved into ſtories or galleries, leading to ſo many ſeparate ranges of apartments, all cut out of the live rock, and riſing ſucceſſively above each other, "ſo that, to be briefe, all the chambers and houſes within this compaſſe, or four galleries, are three hundred, and entirely full

* Archæologia, vii. 333.

† Linſchotten, b. i. c. 44. edit. 1598.

full of carved pagodes, of ſo fearfull, horrible, and develiſh, formes and ſhapes, that it is wonderful to behold." To give any very minute deſcription of theſe ſculptures is incompatible with my propoſed plan: it will, for the preſent, be ſufficient to remark, that theſe ſeparate apartments have in general an interior receſs, or ſanctuary, and a ſmall tank, or reſervoir of water, for the performance of ablutions. In moſt of theſe receſſes is diſplayed the degrading repreſentation of deity before alluded to, "the cylindric ſtone," deſcribed by Mr. Dalrymple, "the conic marble," mentioned in the Aſiatic Reſearches,* and often in union, that ſhocks the eye of modeſty, the too evident emblems of the male and female organs of generation.

It is the weſtern hill, which, according to Governor Boon's account, more particularly challenges attention, ſince it contains the chief pagoda of the iſland: in its altitude, but not in its extent and breadth, this pagoda far exceeds that of Elephanta, "being forty feet high † to the crown of the arch, eighty-four feet long, and forty-ſix broad." The veſtibule, or portico, is proportionably lofty and ſpacious, and it is adorned with two ſtately co-lumns

* Aſiatic Reſearches, i. 254. † Archæologia, vii. 335.

lumns finiſhed with capitals and a baſe. It is in this portico that the two ſurpriſing coloſſal ſtatues above mentioned, twenty-ſeven feet in height and of excellent proportion, are ſtationed, one on each ſide, immediately before the entrance into the grand temple; they are adorned with mitre-caps and ear-rings, after the Indian faſhion; and, to Mr. Boon's artiſt, they ſeemed to have been anciently painted, by the tints of blue and vermilion which yet remained upon them. The portico itſelf has alſo one very magnificent gate, and two others of inferior magnitude. The ſuperior grandeur of this pagoda ſeems to ariſe not only from the height of the roof but from the circumſtance of its being in the form of an arch, whereas that of Elephanta offends the eye, both by its lowneſs and its flatneſs. This arched roof is ſupported by thirty-five maſſy pillars, extremely beautiful conſidering their antiquity, of an octagonal form, and about five feet in diameter; the capitals and baſes of each being ornamented with figures of elephants, horſes, tigers, &c. executed with great ſkill and exactneſs. Two rows of cavities, regularly placed, are viſible round the walls of the temple, for the inſertion of thoſe lamps, which, probably, were kept for ever burning

burning in this gloomy and ſacred retreat; but what in a more particular manner, at the very entrance of the temple, irreſiſtibly impreſſes the mind of the beholder with the moſt awful conceptions of its former magnificent worſhip, is the ſtupendous altar at the farther end of the temple, of a convex form, twenty-ſeven feet in height and twenty in diameter! Round this high offertory, at certain diſtances, are receſſes for lamps, and, directly over it, expands a vaſt concave dome. From theſe numerous and conſpicuous receſſes for *lamps*, from the general poſition of theſe altars towards the *eaſtern* quarter of the pagoda, from the evidence already brought of the general prevalence among the Hindoos in ancient æras of the worſhip of the ſun and of fire, it can hardly be doubted, but that this ſpecies of devotion, deriving perhaps additional ſtrength from the viſible emblem of the deity, whoſe throne was ſuppoſed to be fixed in the ſun, blazed forth in this temple in the fulneſs of its meridian ſplendour. Shall I be thought to have violated all the bounds of probability, if I advance one ſtep farther in conjecture, and offer to the public the novel, yet ſurely, not incredible, ſuppoſition, that the pagodas, both of Elephanta and Salſette, were of that

kind

kind of ſubterraneous retreats, hewn out of the ſolid rock, which were ſo common in Perſia, devoted to the ſplendid rites of MITHRA, and from that deity denominated MITHRATIC CAVES? In thoſe caves they kept a portion of the ſacred fire conſtantly and fervently glowing. The radiant and ſpotleſs image of celeſtial brightneſs and purity was never ſuffered to be extinguiſhed, nor even to emit a languid ray, but continually aſcended in a pure bright pyramid of flame, fed with the richeſt gums, with the moſt fragrant oils, and with the moſt coſtly perfumes of the eaſt.

PORPHYRY, in his admirable treatiſe, *De Antro Nympharum*, treats at large of theſe mithratic caves, of the doctrines taught and the worſhip celebrated in them; he expreſſly ſays,* "that the moſt ancient of the human race, before they were ſufficiently ſkilled in architecture to erect temples, conſecrated cells and caverns to the deity;" and, what is more particularly to our purpoſe, he adds, πανταχȣ δε οπȣ τον ΜΙΘΡΑΝ εγνωσαν, δια σπηλαιȣ τον θεον ιλασκομενων, that is, whereſoever men acknowledged MITHRA as the ſupreme divinity, they performed the ſacred rites in caverns.

* Porphyrius in Antro Nympharum, p. 263. Cantabrigiæ, 1655.

verns. This account indeed appears inconſiſtent with what we read of the PYRÆIA, or fire-temples, which were generally erected on the ſummits of mountains; but theſe are of far later date than the periods to which Porphyry alludes, and owed their origin, according to the magi, to the zeal of Zoroaſter, to preſerve the ſacred flame, which deſcended from heaven, from extinction by the tempeſtuous violence of ſtorms and rain. But theſe caverns were not only the temple of the moſt ſplendid religion, they were the ſolemn ſchools of the ſublimeſt ſciences inculcated in thoſe early ages of the world. What was the ſcience principally inculcated in them, beſides theology, we may learn from the ſame Porphyry in his deſcription of the cave of Zoroaſter: that it was conſecrated to the honour of MITHRA, the parent of the univerſe; that the cave repreſented the world created by MITHRA; and that the elements of nature, and the various quarters of that world, were repreſented by different ſymbols properly diſpoſed around it. The SUN was probably repreſented by a ſphere of gold, or ſome reſplendent gem of immenſe value ſuſpended aloft, and the roof glittering with gold and azure, and with well-imitated repreſentations of the celeſtial bodies, inſpi-

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red the enthusiastic soul of the Brahmin as well with the most elevated conceptions of his own religion as of the high dignity of his distinguished order. If the scenes of the SACONTALA* be picturesque of the manners of the times in which that drama was written, there cannot be entertained a doubt, but that, upon certain occasions, also in those caverns were practised the most mysterious rites of MAGIC, and that they sometimes echoed with the most tremendous incantations.

The assertion of PORPHYRY, relative to the original purpose to which the MITHRATIC CAVES were applied, is strongly corroborated by a passage in CELSUS, quoted by Origen, where that learned writer informs us, that, in the rites of MITHRA, the Persians represented by symbols the twofold motion of the stars, the fixed and the planetary, and the passage of the soul through them. By way of illustrating this doctrine of the syderical metempsychosis, "they erected in their caves an high ladder, on the ascent of which were seven different gates, according with the number of the planets; the first gate was of *lead*, which was intended to mark the slow motion of the pla-

* "Who, like the choleric DURVASAS, has power to consume, like raging fire, whatever offends him?" Sacont. p. 40.

net SATURN; the second gate was composed of *tin*, by which they shadowed out the brilliancy and softness of VENUS, the third gate was of *brass*, which they imagined a just emblem of the solidity and durability of JUPITER; the fourth gate was of *iron*, by which MERCURY was typified, because he is suited, like iron, to all sorts of labours, whence profit may be derived; the fifth gate consisted of a *mixed mass*, of which the heterogeneous composition, variableness, and irregularity, rendered it the fit emblem of MARS; the sixth gate was of *silver*, exhibiting an apt similitude of the mild radiance of the silver empress of THE NIGHT; and the *seventh* was of *gold*, a proper emblem of the SUN, the one being the king of metals, and the other being the sovereign of the sky" I must again repeat, that this notion, of the orbs of heaven being *animated intelligences*, was intimately blended with the most ancient superstition of the earth,* we find it particularly predominant in the Phœnician Cosmogony of TAUT, which asserted their ZOFESAMIN, or the *Overseers* of Heaven to be thus animated,† and the reader will remember a remark quoted before from the Ayeen Akbery,§ that

* Celsus apud Origen contra Celsum, lib. 4.

† Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 42.

§ Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 11.

that many of the ancient Hindoo philoſophers believed, " that the ſtars were the ſouls of men departed this life, and raiſed to that high dignity in reward for their virtues and auſterities."

It was then in periods when the ſolar worſhip, in this part of Aſia, flouriſhed in the zenith of its glory, that THESE CAVERNS were ſcooped out of the native rock, with that indefatigable labour, and with that perſevering patience, which devotion could alone have inſpired, and which the hopes of eternal reward could alone have ſupported. It was in theſe ſolemn retreats of religion and philoſophy, that the contemplative and *abſorbed ſoul* approached neareſt to the perfection of the divine nature. It was *here* that the bright emblem of the divinity beamed forth a luſtre inſupportably reſplendent and powerful, but particularly at that awful ſeaſon, when the world was deprived of the bleſſing of the living ſolar orb, and when nature lay buried in profound ſilence and in midnight darkneſs. If, as Hamilton informs us,* from ocular ſurvey, no leſs than an hundred lamps were preſerved inceſſantly burning before the idol JAGGERNAUT, how many thouſand muſt have been lighted up in the extenſive caverns of Salſette and Elephanta? It is

U 2 probable,

* Hamilton's Voyage, vol. i. p. 385.

probable, that in the day-time the Brahmans mounted the eminences of their rocks, and paid their devotions on the summits of the loftiest mountains. They ascended the heights of Salsette, as the Egyptian priests of old ascended the apex of the pyramids, *to adore the Sun, and to make astronomical observations.* Accordingly, we are informed, by some accurate observers, that, from the eminence of the rocky steep of CANARAH, to which there is a regular ascent of steps cut out of the rock, a prospect opens itself, beyond description beautiful and extensive, and that it is an eminence not to be looked down from without terror. M. Anquetil expressly says, that, to him, one of the mountains of Canarah seemed to be hewn to a point by human art, undoubtedly from the same religious impulse that dictated the form of the pyramids of Egypt, which the learned Greaves insists were not *sepulchres*, as has been generally supposed, but stupendous temples,* erected to OSIRIS, the Egyptian appellation of the Sun, the Egyptians imitating in their fabrication of them the model of the solar ray, and the usual form under which the deity was in the most ancient times worshipped. They were

* See an account of a visit to Canarah by some members of the council of Bombay, inserted in M. Anquetil's account.

were indeed denominated pyramids απο τȣ πυρος, from the figure of a flame of *fire*; and a superſtition, congenial with their name, was once undoubtedly practiſed in their gloomy retreats. When the immediate object of their veneration was loſt to their view, the Brahmin devotees deſcended with the ſhades of evening into their ſtony receſſes, and *there* renewed (before objects emblematical of his apparent figure, power, and properties) their fervent adoration. THE ORB OF RADIATED GOLD, THE BRIGHT SPIRAL FLAME, aſcending from the ever-glowing altar, impreſſed their *inmoſt ſouls with an awful ſenſe of the preſent* deity. The planetary train was repreſented by images equally emblematical of their ſuppoſed form and influence, and the ſigns of the zodiac blazed in imitative gold round the emboſſed and vaulted roof. Imagination cannot avoid kindling at the ſcene, and it is difficult to refrain from ruſhing into the enthuſiaſm of poetry, while we take a review of the probable ſplendour and magnificence of this ancient ſpecies of devotion. All the caverns might truly be called PYRÆIA, or ſanctuaries that cheriſhed the eternal flame. The whole circumference of the rock was illumined, and the mountain burned with fire! Throughout

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all the deep receſſes of its caverns, for ever reverberated the echoes of the hallowed CONQUE OF SACRIFICE. Around all the ſhores of the iſland, THE SACRED BELL of religion inceſſantly rang. The ſecret gloom of thoſe majeſtic foreſts, that ſurrounded the rock, perpetually reſounded with the MYSTIC SONG of prayer and thankſgiving. One order of prieſts, arrayed in veſtments of WOVEN BARK,* and having on their heads thoſe pyramidal caps, which equally diſtinguiſhed the Indian and the Egyptian prieſts, and which, M. Savary informs us, are at this day worn by the latter, attended to watch the never-dying flame, and invigorated it by the frequent injection of precious gums and aromatic woods. Another order of prieſts was employed in preparing the various ſacrifices. Some were occupied in inſtructing the younger Brahmins in the profound arcana of thoſe more abſtruſe ſciences, of which the numerous emblems on every ſide ſo conſpicuouſly attracted the attention, while others again were initiating them into the myſterious rites of that religion, of which the principal deities were ſculptured on the walls of their caverns. No doubt many of thoſe ſculptures, which cannot now be explained, ſhadow

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* See the SACONTALA throughout.

out the ſacred hiſtory of the Indian religion as well as the heroic feats of the ancient rajahs. They may exhibit the contentions of the benevolent and malignant Dewtah. They may diſplay the triumphs of perſevering piety over vice armed with giant terrors, and of juſtice over oppreſſion, though throned in the plenitude of its power, and arrayed in all the gorgeous enſigns of uſurped ſovereignty. This appears to me the moſt certain clue to the explanation of the greateſt part of the carved imagery; and exactly in this manner were the innumerable mythologic figures that crowd the walls of ELORA, near *Dowletabad*, explained to M. Anquetil by the two Brahmins who attended him thither for the purpoſe of throwing light upon this obſcure ſubject. Mr. Dalrymple's account, in the *Archæologia*, greatly ſtrengthens this conjecture; for, the writer clearly diſcovered "the effigies of great perſons compelling their ſubjects to obedience; others executing juſtice; others, as he conceived, by the mildneſs of their aſpect, ſhewing tenderneſs in their admonitions; and others again exhibiting inſtances of their proud proweſs in arms." While virtue and ſcience kindled at theſe examples ever preſent to their view, while devotion was animated by the awful

presence of the deities addressed, how ardent must have been the throb for distinction, which the former felt, how energic the ejaculations of the latter! Every tongue uttered the dictates of wisdom, and every heart bounded with the transports of religion.

Lest these assertions should appear to some of my readers too general, and lest I should be supposed to have substituted declamation in the place of facts, I must now intreat their permission to descend to some particulars, that will elucidate what has been just said, and consider the first origin, primitive intent, and progressive improvement, of hieroglyphic science. The subject, as it relates to India, has never before been fully investigated, and, if their patience be not totally exhausted, some interesting matter will perhaps occur, in the course of that investigation, to gratify curiosity and reward attention.

That many of the hieroglyphic sculptures in the caverns of Salsette and Elephanta bear a reference to the astronomical, as well as to the mythological, notions prevailing in India, cannot be doubted by any body who considers, how intimately, in the ancient world, these sciences were connected, or rather that their mythology,

mythology, in a great degree, rested upon the basis of their wild astronomical speculations. It has been asserted by the ancients, and the assertion has been received with implicit confidence by the moderns, that HIEROGLYPHICS were invented by the priests of Egypt, to shade, under a veil of impenetrable mystery, the sublime arcana of their theology and philosophy; that these hieroglyphic, or allegorical, characters were the first written language of mankind, and were the undoubted origin of alphabetical letters. Hence Kircher on this subject declares, De primævis Egyptiorum litteris variæ diversorum sunt opiniones. Omnes tamen in hoc consentiunt, plerasque ex sacrorum animalium forma, incessu aliarumque corporis partium situbus et symmetria desumptas.* A writer of the present century, however, not inferior in genius to the most learned of the ancients, who has devoted the greater part of his second volume of the Divine Legation of Moses to the elucidation of the obscure history of hieroglyphics, and, in particular, of those of Egypt, to which country our subject at present naturally directs our attention, strenuously contends, that emblematic painting was the first as well as readiest method which mankind

* Œdip. Ægypt. vol. iii. p. 42.

mankind adopted to communicate their conceptions to each other. He exemplifies his new theory by exhibiting an engraving* of a Mexican picture, copied from Purchase, which contains the history of an ancient king of Mexico, during a period of fifty-one years, highly curious, and full of emblematic figures. He corroborates that theory by affirming, from a Spanish writer, that, when the inhabitants of the coast of South America sent expresses to Montezuma concerning the first invasion of the Spaniards, their advices were delineated in large paintings upon cloth. Hieroglyphic figures of animals and other objects, in imitation of those paintings, he represents as the next gradation in the mode of communicating information; and, when these were established, though he will not allow them to have been *invented*, he admits them to have been *employed*, by the artful policy of the Egyptian priests, for the purpose of concealing the more sacred mysteries of their superstition, as well from the eyes of the vulgar among their own countrymen as from the scrutinising curiosity of learned foreigners. Whatever might have been the real origin of Hieroglyphics, and this seems

* See that engraving, vol. ii. p. 67. of the Divine Legation of Moses, demonstrated.

ſeems to be the moſt rational account of it, the ſame policy, in order to render them more auguſt and venerable, led thoſe prieſts to repreſent them as fabricated by the immediate inſpiration of the gods, whoſe rites and myſteries they typified. The ſtupendous ſyſtem of the Egyptian religion and ſciences ſoon became involved in the holy gloom of hieroglyphics. The veſtibules, the walls, the roofs, of their temples, were covered with theſe myſtic ſymbols, ſhadowing out, under the figures of animals and other expreſſive emblems, the hiſtory of their greater and tutelary deities, as well as that of their kings and legiſlators, and indicative of the revolutions and influences of the hoſt of heaven. As in the Egyptian ſo in the Hindoo temples, near to the deity were generally placed the animals ſacred to that deity, which, gradually becoming his repreſentative ſymbol upon earth, in time ſucceeded throughout Egypt to the honours the deity enjoyed, and, even in India, were honoured with reſpect, bordering upon veneration. On this point I cannot help agreeing with Shuckford, in oppoſition to Warburton, that here we may plainly diſcover the origin of that worſhip, ſo degrading to human nature, which was paid in ancient pagan times to the brute creation;

creation; but, as that kind of worſhip was never very predominant in Hindoſtan, I ſhall not particularly enlarge upon the ſubject, though ſome of its ſtriking features will naturally meet our views in the courſe of this inveſtigation. Thus, in the former country, the Apis was the known ſymbol of *Oſiris*, and was accordingly worſhipped. The White Bull, according to Sir William Jones, is the animal on which *Seeva** is repreſented in the Indian pagodas; and this may be one cauſe of the general homage paid to that animal in Hindoſtan, although, take away the allegory, and it will be found, that both are only venerated for

* Caſting my eye, during the period of writing this diſſertation, upon Mr. Coſtard's laborious attempt to trace, to oriental primitives, the Greek names of the ſeveral planets, I obſerve, that, in examining the appellation *Ζεὺς*, or JUPITER, he produces two Chaldee verbs, which he tranſlates *Sevah* and *Seve*, ſignifying *to exult for joy*, either of which, he ſays, might be its poſſible radix. He then traces the ſame word to an equally poſſible radix in Arabic, which he writes *du* or *diu*, ſignifying Lord, or one that poſſeſſes; with which he adds, "very nearly agrees the *dyw* of the Welſh, the *deu* of the Corniſh, and the *deus* of the Latins," to which may probably be added the *dev* of the Hindoos. This name Mr. Coſtard thinks might ſuit the character of the prince, but the name of the *planet* he would deduce from *dha*, lux, lumen, ſplendor, which might be the primary meaning of the Chaldee *Sevah* If the above derivation be not too far fetched, it will help to unravel the hiſtory of this god, who, we have before obſerved, has been denominated the *Jupiter Genitor* of India. Coſtard's Aſtronomy. p. 193.

for their great use in agriculture. A *cat* was in Egypt considered as a symbol of the *moon*, and Plutarch † gives this curious philosophical reason for it; they thought that the contraction and the dilatation of the eye of that animal afforded a just emblem of the increase and decrease of the moon's orb. The representative symbol of the moon in India, according to the Heetopades § and Mr. Wilkins, is a *rabbit*, which animal constantly ornaments the right hand of the representative images of that deity, drawn or sculptured in the pagodas. A serpent was adored in Egypt as the emblem of the divine nature; not only, says Warburton, " an account of its great vigour and spirit, but of its extended age and revirescence;" and we have observed from the Ayeen Akbery, that in Cashmere, there were no less than seven hundred places, where carved figures of snakes were worshipped. Indeed almost all the deities in Salsette and Elephanta either grasp serpents in their hands or are environed with them, which can only be intended as a mark of their divinity. They are also sculptured on the cornices surrounding the

† Plutarch in his Treatise de Iside et Osiride, p. 360, which treatise developes all the complicated mysteries of that worship.

§ See Heetopades, p. 177, and note.

the roofs of thoſe caverns, and the more modern pagodas; a circumſtance which reminds me of another uſe to which ſerpents were applied in the ſymbols of Egypt; for, their wreathed bodies, in its hieroglyphic ſculpture, repreſented the oblique courſe of the ſtars, while the ſame bodies, formed into a circle, were an emblem of eternity; and it will be remembered, that the ſerpent was one of the moſt conſpicuous of the forty-eight great conſtellations, into which the ancients divided the viſible heavens. On thoſe cornices too, in emboſſed work, are ſeen very conſpicuous figures of horſes, elephants, and lions, three of the moſt diſtinguiſhed conſtellations of the Hindoos; the two former of which ſtand foremoſt in order among thoſe enumerated in Mr. Coſtard's table* of the twenty-ſeven conſtellations, of which the zodiac of the Indians conſiſts, called ACHEVINI and BARANI; literally, the horſe and the elephant: while the third, or SING, is that favourite ſign of the ſame zodiac, which gives the additional honour of its name to that of every brave rajah, who chooſes to be diſtinguiſhed on the roll of fame for poſſeſſing the fortitude of a LION.† Theſe ſymbolic animals probably, in the ancient mythological ſyſtem, repreſented the renowned hero-deities of India

* Coſtard's ASTRON. p. 5. † As CHEYT SING.

dia in the ſame manner as in Egypt the god Orus was recogniſed in Orion, Anubis in Sirius, or the Dog-ſtar, Typho in Urſa Major, or the Bear, and Nephthe in Draco, or the Dragon. It was this cloſe union of the Hindoo theology and aſtronomy which deceived that elegant and judicious hiſtorian, Mr. Orme,* when he declared, that the hiſtory of their gods was a heap of the greateſt abſurdities. "It is, ſays he, Eſwara twiſting off the neck of Brahma; it is the Sun who gets his teeth knocked out, and the Moon, who has her face beat black-and-blue at a feaſt, at which the gods quarrel, and fight with the ſpirit of a mob." Theſe celeſtial combats, repreſented at various feſtivals in India, doubtleſs allude to the conjunction or oppoſition of the conſtellations; and the aſſertion of Mr. Wilkins, that, on every eclipſe, the Hindoos believe thoſe planets to be ſeized upon by a large ſerpent, or dragon, which aſſertion is ſupported by two paſſages of the Geeta† and Heetopades,‡ in the ſtrongeſt manner corroborates the ſuppoſition. I cannot paſs by this inviting opportunity of demonſtrating the very ſtriking

 ſimilarity

* Orme's Hindoſtan, vol i. p. 3.

† Bhagvat Geeta, p. 149.

‡ Heetopades, p. 28, and note, p. 29[illegible]

ſimilarity in ſentiment, ſubſiſting upon this as well as upon many other occaſions, between the Hindoos and the Chineſe, proving either an original deſcent from the ſame common anceſtor, or a moſt intimate connection between thoſe nations at ſome remote æra. The Jeſuit Le Compte, giving a deſcription of a partial eclipſe of the ſun, which he obſerved in China about the end of April, 1688, informs us, that, during the whole of the eclipſe, the Chineſe were under the greateſt alarms, imagining they were going to be ſuddenly enveloped in thick darkneſs, and made every where the moſt hideous yelling and horrid noiſes *to oblige the dragon to depart.* "For, to this animal," he adds, "they attribute all the diſappearances of the ſtars which take place, becauſe the celeſtial dragon, being hunger-bitten, at that time holds the Sun or Moon faſt between his teeth, with intent to devour them."*

The whole of this curious relation exhibits to us, not only deciſive evidence of the early proficiency of the Hindoos and Chineſe in the ſcience of aſtronomy, but a glaring proof how deeply, and at what remote periods, their aſtronomical and theological ſpeculations were blended

* Le Compte's Memoirs of China, p. 480. Engliſh edit.

blended together, and, as it were, interwoven. To explain the allusion, it is necessary that the reader, not conversant with astronomy, should be informed of the following circumstance, to which I request his attention, as it will be of material use towards understanding many parts of the Indian astronomical mythology that will hereafter occur. The two points in the heavens, where the moon's apparent orbit cuts the ecliptic, are called the MOON'S NODES. The point where the moon appears to cross the ecliptic, during her passage into North latitude, is denominated her ASCENDING NODE. On the other hand, the point in the heavens, at which the moon crosses the ecliptic, during her passage into south latitude, is called by astronomers her DESCENDING NODE. To the circular curve, thus described by the moon's orbit, the fancy of the ancient Asiatic astronomers assigned the figure of a serpent, as indeed they did to the path of the sun through the signs of the zodiac, which, in eastern hieroglyphics, is represented by a circle of intertwining serpents. Serpens and Draco are terms that in astronomy are synonimous, and it is therefore, according to Dr. Long, whose account of the nodes I have followed above,* that the Arabians give the

* See Dr. Long's Astronomy, vol. ii. p. 361.

appellation of *dragon's bellies* to thofe parts of the orbit of the moon where fhe makes the greateft deviation from the line of the ecliptic. This is cuftomary with them at this day, and proves that they derived their aftronomical notions from the fame fountain with the Indians and Chinefe; I mean their anceftors of the old Chaldæan fchool. The moon's afcending node is therefore called the DRAGON'S HEAD, and her defcending node the DRAGON'S TAIL. But we fee that the allegorical allufion of the rapacity of the celeftial dragon is likewife extended to the fun, as indeed it may be to any planet, by whofe paffing orbit the ecliptic is at any time and in a fimilar manner interfected, and from ideas of this kind undoubtedly have arifen all thofe ridiculous tales of the contefts of thofe celeftial combatants. As an illuftration of what has been juft obferved, I have annexed a reprefentation of the real aftronomical figure made by the moon's orbit in paffing the ecliptic, and of the hieroglyphic emblem to which it indifputably gave birth.

It may here be remarked that no *eclipfes* can happen, except when the two planets are in or near the nodes or interfections of the *ecliptic*, whence indeed that great circle derives its name. This portion of the heavens, there-

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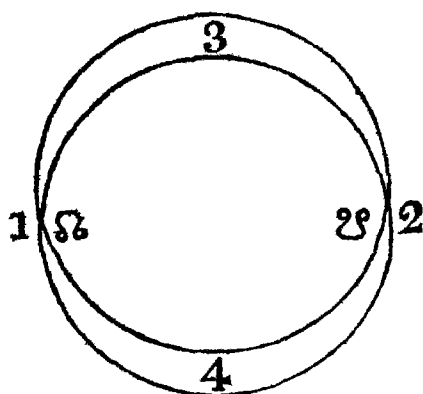
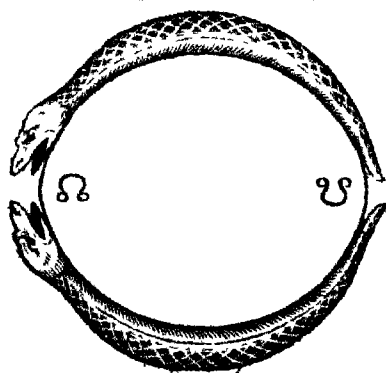
fore, has been in all ages the object of more particular observation of the speculative race of philosophers, and it is in this region that infidelity has been too fatally busy in forming calculations and erecting hypotheses subversive of the Mosaic theology and hostile to the dearest interests of mankind. I shall, hereafter, have occasion to evince that it is chiefly, if not solely, on calculations founded upon the retrograde motion of these nodes from East to West, that is, in an order contrary to that of the signs, and the slow, but now-demonstrated, decrease of the obliquity of that ecliptic, after the rate of a degree in one hundred years, that all the ancient atheistical systems, asserting the immense duration of the world, have been founded. On a minute examination of them, we shall probably discover that they are erected upon a basis scarcely less chimerical than the fable of the celestial dragon, who, upon every lunar eclipse, is supposed by the Hindoos and the Chinese to seize with his teeth that affrighted orb. In the astronomical figure subjoined, number 1 denotes the moon in her ascending node, number 2 represents the planet in her descending node, numbers 3 and 4 mark that wide portion of the serpentine curve, which, in the Arabian astronomy, is called the belly of

the dragon. By the dragon, Dr. Long obſerves, the ancients did not mean that fictitious and monſtrous figure with wings, which we ſee repreſented in modern paintings, but ſimply a large ſnake, as delineated below, by a compariſon of which with the former mathematical figure we ſo plainly trace the progreſſive union of their aſtronomical ſpeculations with their hieroglyphic theology.

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The Brahmins of India and the Bonzes of China, to impreſs with awe and veneration the inferior claſſes of mankind, purpoſely veiled under obſcure ænigmas their deep aſtronomical diſcoveries, and inveſted ſcience with the mantle of hieroglyphics. With what unwearied aſſiduity aſtronomy itſelf was anciently purſued in both countries, thoſe maſſy marble inſtruments, erected in the obſervatories of Pekin and Benares, to be ſeen, the former in Du Halde, the latter in the Philoſophical Tranſactions, and with correct engravings of which that portion of this work, which treats of their literature, will be decorated, remain perpetual and irrefragable teſtimonies. I ſhall, hereafter, in my review of oriental aſtronomy, have occaſion to remark how deeply theſe aſtronomical purſuits influenced all the national habits and opinions of Eaſtern people; how intimately they were blended with all their ſyſtems of theology, and even infected their ſolemn codes of legiſlation, in which we ſhould leaſt of all expect to find the operations of fancy to predominate. Of all the phænomena of aſtronomy, none, however, excited more general diſmay and aſtoniſhment, throughout all the nations of the Pagan world, than eclipſes. The moon was thought, during thoſe ſolemn

periods of public alarm, to be ſtruggling in laborious toils, and, to aſſuage her pangs, in that moment of imagined diſtreſs, while the Chineſe rent the air with the ſound of cymbals, trumpets, and the clanging of leſs melodious inſtruments, the whole affrighted nation of the Hindoos crowded to the banks of the Ganges, and other ſacred rivers, and anxiouſly endeavoured, by univerſal ablution in their ſtreams, to prepare themſelves for the deſtiny which they thought rapidly approaching.

As another evident proof how early and how deeply the ancient Indians were engaged in aſtronomical purſuits, the reader will permit me to remind him of what has already been remarked from Mr. Halhed, that the days of the week are named, in the moſt ancient and venerable Sanſcreet books, from the very ſame planets to which they were aſſigned by the Greeks and Romans. Their names, as they ſtand in that gentleman's publication, are AUDEETYE WAR, or Solis dies; SOME WAR, or Lunæ dies; MUNGUL WAR, or Martis dies; BOODHE WAR, or Mercurii dies; BREEHESPET WAR, or Jovis dies, SHOOKRE WAR, or Veneris dies; and SHENISHER WAR, or Saturni dies. I muſt here obſerve that theſe names of the ſeven planets, over each of which a god preſides,

presides, are very differently written by M. Sonnerat, as the reader may see in page 170 of the first of his instructive but costly volumes,* as indeed are almost all the names of the Indian divinities, from the mode of writing them in the Asiatic Researches, and by Mr. Wilkins, a circumstance which has often been to me the occasion of some perplexity, since I could only discover them by their functions to be the same deities. M. Sonnerat has in the same page supplied me with a remarkable proof of my recent assertion, that the various conjunctions and oppositions of the planets, their approaches towards the earth, and their retrogradations, are, among the Hindoos, the perpetual source of rejoicing or alarm. "SANI, or Saturn," says this author, "is the god who inflicts punishment

* I have, with good reason, mentioned the publication of M. Sonnerat as costly though instructive and ingenious. For the two quarto volumes, of which it consists, I paid Mr. White three guineas and a half; and to give the reader some faint idea of the expence which I have been at on account of this publication, I shall insert below the prices of only a few of these foreign authors upon oriental subjects; antiquities, geography, and astronomy. Antiquité expliquée, 15 tom. 15l. 15s. D'Ancarville, Recherches, &c. 3 tom. 3l. 18s. Voyages de Niebuhr, 4 tom. 5l. 5s. D'Anville Antiquit. Geograph. 1l. 5s Kircher's Œdipus Ægyptiacus, 4 tom. 4l. La Lande, Astronomie, 4l. 4s &c &c &c. besides the most expensive of our English authors on Indian and Oriental Antiquities, as the Asiatic Researches, 2 tom. 5l. 5s. Pocock's Egypt, 2 tom. 4l. 4s. &c. &c. &c. &c.

nishment on men during this life; he approaches only to annoy them: Saturday is the day of the week sacred to him. The Indians entertain dreadful apprehensions concerning him, and offer to him conciliatory prayers. He is represented as of a *blue colour*; he has four arms; he is mounted upon a *raven*; and is surrounded by two serpents, whose intertwining bodies form a *circle* round him." The raven, I must remark, is a bird of ill presage, and how it came originally to be so esteemed all over the oriental world will be clearly manifested when we shall arrive at the history of the true Saturnian patriarch. The serpents, forming a *circle* round the orb of Saturn, doubtless indicate the vast *ring* which surrounds that planet; and, if this mythological delineation of Saturn be of any remote date, it is a still farther proof of their early discoveries in astronomy, since the phænomenon of Saturn's ring was, according to Dr. Long, never promulgated to European astronomers before the time of the great Huygens, who first published his *Systema Saturnium* in 1659.*

I shall presently enter upon a more extended and particular inquiry into the theological and metaphysical doctrines taught in the caverns of

* See Long's Astronomy, vol. ii. p. 714.

of India, and endeavour to ascertain the æra in which, and the race by whom, they were originally fabricated. That they *were* caves in which the mysteries of Mithra, or mysteries very much resembling those of Mithra, were anciently performed, has, I trust, been proved both from the analogy in religion between the old inhabitants of Persia and India, in their general veneration of the SUN and FIRE, as well as from the similitude of the structures and ornaments of these caverns with those of the rocky temples, excavated, in honour of Mithra, in the mountains of Persia and Media. It appears to me that MITHRA and SURYA are the same mythologic being, and that the SAURAS and the PERSEES are sects only different in name.* The former appellation is asserted by Kircher to be the same with Mithraim, or Misraim;† and, if we could allow that derivation to be just, we should not long be perplexed concerning the origin of his worship, since Misraim was the first-born son of the idolatrous Ham. Others, however, have, with more probability, derived the name from an oriental primitive, signifying a rock, an etymology very correspondent

* See page 197 preceding.

† Œdip. Ægypt. tom. i. p. 218.

pondent with his origin; for Mithras, in the Persian mythology, is said to have been born of a stone, by which was allegorically denoted the FIRE emitted by the collision of two flint-stones: *semina flammæ abstrusa in venis silicis.* Plutarch, possibly from some oriental fable, has improved upon this allegory; for, he acquaints us, that Mithra, born of a stone, and desirous of having offspring, copulated with a stone, whence was born a son named Diorphos, LIGHT. Mithra, in the same vein of allegory, is said, by Porphyry, to have been A STEALER OF OXEN, which he secreted in caverns; intimating at once that the sun, like the ox, was the emblem of fertility, and that his prolific and generative heat produced that fertility by secret and invisible operations.

It is very remarkable that, according to a passage in Eusebius quoted by Mr. Bryant,* Osiris himself was, by the ancients, sometimes called SURIUS, Οσιριν προσαγορευουσι και Συριον; and still more so that, according to Lilius Gyraldus, cited by the same writer, the Persian deity should be denominated SURE; *Persæ* Συρη *Deum vocant:* for, in this title, we recognize

* See Analysis, vol. ii. p. 181, where are the references to these respective authors.

cognize the very name of the solar divinity of India. If this should appear far fetched, by reverting to that country where the worship of the SUN and PLANETS was first propagated by the impious Belus, we shall find in its ancient name of Συρια, Syria, and in its modern appellation of Souria, sufficient intimation from what region and from what people the Indian name and adoration of the sun were probably derived. Earliest established in that country, the Sabian error diffused itself rapidly over all the East. The Mithratic worship in caverns, however, continued longest in Persia. The Persians thought it impious to erect temples to the deity; they continued, therefore, to perform this worship by night in the native and obscure cavern, and by day under the expanded canopy of heaven.

Cambyses, that remorseless despoiler of the Egyptian temples, is, by Mountfaucon, supposed to have been the occasion of renovating the Mithratic worship in Egypt about five hundred years before the æra of Christianity; for, though the Egyptians had doubtless worshipped the sun in caverns long before that period, yet the worship in subterraneous recesses had, for many centuries, been superseded by that in their august temples. That the rites of the

Persian

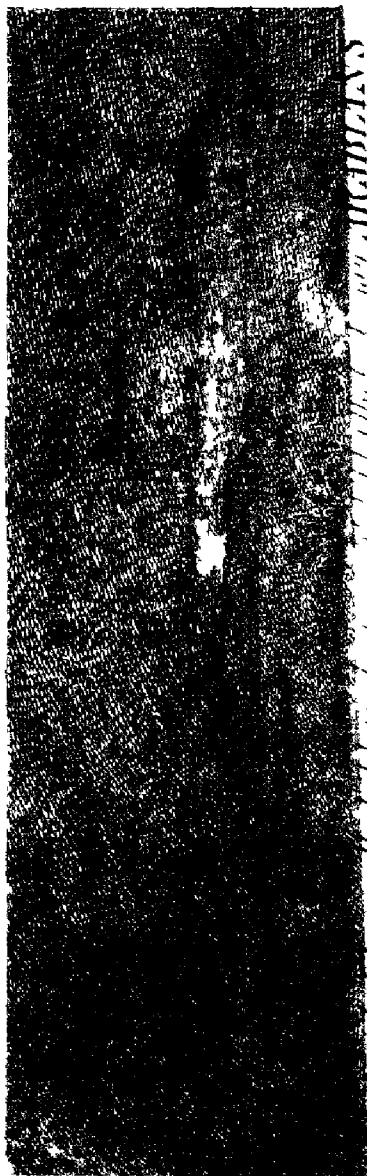
Persian Mithra did, at that period, a second time commence, and were blended with those of the Egyptian deities, is evident from a very curious engraving, with which he has favoured the public, of an actual SACRIFICE TO THE SUN, represented in an artificial cavern near the ruins of BABAIN, in Upper Egypt. I thought it so curious a monument of this once almost-universal idolatry, and, at the same time, so immediately illustrative of my own assertions of the ancient prevalence of it in India, that I have had it engraved, and shall present the reader with two descriptions of it, written at two different periods, a century distant from each other. The first, from Mountfaucon, is that of the Jesuit Du Bernat, who designed the whole upon the spot, and is as follows: "We passed the canal of Joseph, an ancient aqueduct, and went to the village Touna, near the ruins of the city Babain, which is in the midst of those of Abousir. We passed over these ruins and a long plain of sand, which brought us to a very singular monument, which my guide would have me see, and which *deserves* indeed to be seen. It IS A SACRIFICE OFFERED TO THE SUN, and is sculptured in half-relief on a great rock. The hardness of the rock would have

have been able to defend this monument from the injuries of time, but not thoſe of the ſword, which we find the Arabians have uſed to deface that part of the ſacrifice which is wanting. I made a deſign of it as it then appeared. This ſtupendous cavern is hewn out of a vaſt rock in the middle of a mountain. It muſt have taken up a long time and prodigious labour to excavate this rock, between five and ſix feet deep, and for fifty feet high and fifty wide; for, in this ſo great ſuperficies, all the figures relating to the ſacrifice to the ſun are comprehended. The ſun appears encircled with a body of rays fifteen or twenty feet in diameter. Two prieſts of a natural ſtature, their heads covered with long caps terminating in POINTS, ſtretch their hands towards the ſun, adoring him. The ends of their fingers touch the ends of the ſolar rays. Two little boys, covered like the prieſts, ſtand by their ſides, and reach them two great goblets full of liquor. Below the ſun there are three lambs, killed and extended on piles, conſiſting of ten pieces of wood. Lower, by the piles, are ſeven jars, or *diotas*. On the other ſide of the ſun, oppoſite to the ſacrificers, there are two women and two girls in full relief, joined to the rock by part

of

of their backs only and their feet. We see very plainly marks of the strokes by which their heads were destroyed. Behind the two boys there is a kind of square, charged with several hieroglyphics, but some larger than others are placed up and down in the image."* So far M. Bernat in the Antiquities of Mountfaucon. The other account is that of M. Savary, who visited this curious monument in 1777, and I am happy in an opportunity of doing justice, in this respect, to the accuracy of this traveller, who has been decried as a writer rather fanciful than correct. Through each of the descriptions a strong feature of similarity reigns, and it must give pleasure to the reader to find that, in the space of nearly a century, no fresh injury has been done, through the prejudice and superstition of the tyrants under whose dominion Egypt groans, to so beautiful a fragment of mythologic antiquity.

" A league to the south (says M. Savary) are the ruins of an ancient city, which enrich the small town of Babain. Some distance beyond is a curious monument, a rock smoothed by the chissel, in the body of which a grotto has

* See Mountfaucon, L'Antiquité expliquée, the supplement on the gods of Egypt, tom. ii. book 7, and plate 50.

has been cut fifty feet in diameter and six deep; the bottom represents *a sacrifice to the sun*, which is sculptured in demi-relief; on the right hand, two priests, *with pointed caps*, raise their arms towards that orb, and touch the end of its rays with their fingers; behind them, two children, with similar caps, hold vases for the libation. Three wood piles, sustained by seven vases with handles, and placed under the sun, bear slain lambs. On the left, are two young maidens, who are only attached to the stone by the feet and back: the Arabs have broken off the heads, and disfigured them with their lances. Various hieroglyphics around give, no doubt, the history of this sacrifice, which I believe is meant to Jupiter Ammon, a symbolical deity, by which the ancient Egyptians denoted the Sun's entrance into the sign of the *Ram*. This animal was consecrated to Jupiter, and they then celebrated the commencement of the astronomical year and the renewal of light. The monument thus described, cut in hard stone, cannot but endure to the latest posterity."*

Of this most valuable and elaborate remain of antiquity, so directly elucidatory of the

* Savary's Letters on E[illegible]

Mithratic worſhip of the Perſians, and which, perhaps, has not, for its ſingular curioſity, its rival in the world; Mr. Mazell, the engraver, has taken uncommon pains to furniſh the reader with an exact copy: and Mountfaucon himſelf having farther obliged his readers with various judicious obſervations and conjectures concerning the ſeveral objects pourtrayed upon it, I ſhall ſtate them as a guide to the judgement of the reader, while he ſurveys with wonder a work thus exquiſitely wrought with ſo rude an inſtrument as the chiſſel.

The Perſians, our author remarks, had two ways of repreſenting the SUN, in ſculpture and painting: the one, under the form of a young man, whom they denominated MITHRAS, and the other in the ſimilitude of a HUMAN FACE RADIATED. The latter is exhibited in the annexed plate; and, in the ſecond part of this volume, my ſubſcribers will be preſented with a very correct engraving, copied from a rock, of the Perſian Mithras, WINGED, with other aſtronomical ſymbols. By the three piles on which the lambs are extended for ſacrifice, he is of opinion, are ſymbolized the THREE SEASONS; for, anciently, they reckoned only three. By the ſeven vaſes are denoted the SEVEN DAYS of the week, or elſe

elſe the ſeven planets; and, in coroboration of this laſt conjecture, he refers to an image of Mithras engraved in another part of his Antiquities, near which are ſeven altars flaming to the honour of that deity. The repreſentation of time and its various parts, by ſymbolical figures, was a very common and a very natural practice with thoſe ancient mythologiſts who adored the SUN, whoſe revolutions are the fountain and guide of all the diviſions of time, as the ſupreme God! The TIARÆ on the head of the prieſts, he obſerves, very much reſemble thoſe of the Perſians going in proceſſion in the baſs-reliefs found at CHELMINAR, near the ancient Perſepolis, to be ſeen in his ſecond volume. The ſurrounding hieroglyphics, however, are evidently of Egyptian origin, ſince the HAWK, which appears on one ſide, and the IBIS, on the other, were birds holden in the higheſt veneration among the ancient Egyptians. Their being ſculptured, together with the ſymbols of the Perſian ſuperſtition, in this image, are irrefragable proofs of his antecedent aſſertion, that, at the period of its excavation, the Egyptian and Perſian devotion had begun to aſſimilate.*

* Conſult the whole of Mountfaucon's ingenious remarks in the page of his ſupplement cited before.

Caves, and other similar subterranean recesses, consecrated to the worship of the Sun, were very generally, if not universally, in request among nations where that superstition was practised; and some of these caverns were full as curious in their construction, though possibly not so magnificent, as those of Media, Persia, and India. Various engravings of Mithratic caves in Media and Persia are to be met with in the travels of Le Bruyn and Sir John Chardin in the former of those countries. The mountains of Chusistan, in particular, at this day abound with stupendous excavations of this sort. From the higher Asia the veneration for sacred caverns gradually diffused itself over Asia Minor. The lofty steeps of Parnassus, sacred to the Muses, were covered with caverns. The Sybil made her dark responses amidst the gloom of a cavern; and it was from the hallowed rock of Delphi that the priestess of Apollo, (the solar deity of Greece,) inspired with a holy fury, uttered those oracles, that were so widely celebrated in the ancient world. In the course of its progress from the East, this species of devotion so far infected even the Roman people, in the early periods of their empire, that they celebrated feasts in honour of Mithra, and dedicated

dedicated an altar to that deity with this inscription, *Deo invicto soli Mithræ.* The reigning idolatry was vigorously attacked by those celebrated fathers of the church, the eloquent Tertullian and the more violent Jerome; the former of whom ridicules the votaries of that superstition under the term of *knights, or soldiers, of Mithra,** while the latter brands the place of their worship with the title of the *Den of Mithra.*† The ancient prevalence, indeed, of the solar worship in Rome is evident from the sacred reverence that prevailed for the *vestal fire,* which was kindled by the rays of the sun, and which the virgin priestesses, who attended it, kept continually burning in consecrated vases. In such profound veneration was this *hallowed flame* holden, that the accidental extinction of it was supposed to be the fatal presage of the most dreadful calamities to the empire. Virgil represents Æneas, the vaunted progenitor of the Romans, as zealously preserving this sacred fire amidst the surrounding conflagration of Troy:

——————————— Vestamque potentem,
Æternumque *adytis* effert *penetralibus* ignem.

Virg. Æneid. ii. 297.

The

* Mithra signat in frontibus milites suos, lib. i. de Baptismo, cap. i.

† Mithræ Spelæum, epist. ad Lætam, cap. ii.

The worſhip of Mithra, which ſtill continued to be practiſed by ſome devotees, was finally proſcribed at Rome, by order of Gracchus, præfect of the prætorium, in the 4th century.

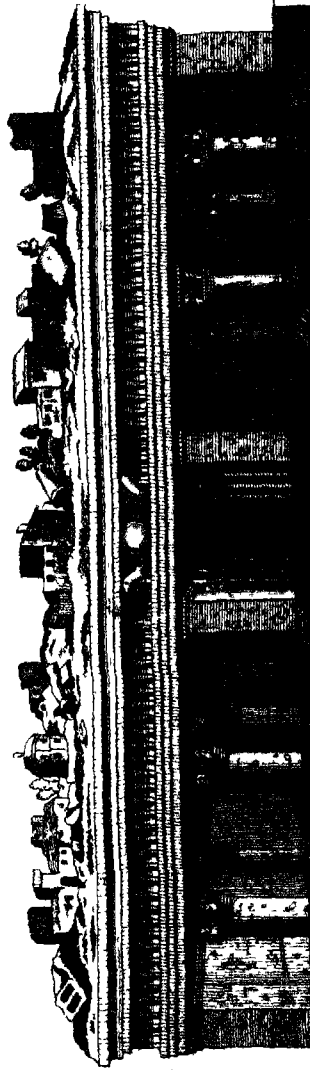
Alluſive to this kind of cavern-temple and this ſpecies of devotion, there is a remarkable paſſage in Ezekiel,* where the inſpired prophet in a viſion beholds, and in the moſt ſublime language ſtigmatizes, the horrible idolatrous abominations, which the Iſraelites had borrowed from their Aſiatic neighbours of Chaldæa, Egypt, and Perſia. *And he brought me*, ſays the prophet, *to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold* A HOLE IN THE WALL. *Then ſaid he unto me, ſon of man, dig now in the wall; and, when I had digged in the wall, behold a* DOOR. *And he ſaid unto me, go in*, (that is, into this CAVERN-TEMPLE,) *and behold the wicked abominations that they do there. So I went in, and ſaw; and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beaſts, and* ALL THE IDOLS *of the houſe of Iſrael, were* POURTRAYED UPON THE WALL ROUND ABOUT. In this ſubterraneous temple were *ſeventy men of the ancients of the houſe of Iſrael*, and their employment was of a nature very nearly ſimilar to that of the prieſts in Salſette; THEY STOOD WITH EVERY MAN

* Ezek. viii. 6. et ſeq.

MAN HIS CENSER IN HIS HAND, AND A THICK CLOUD OF INCENSE WENT UP. *Then ſaid he unto me; ſon of man, haſt thou ſeen what the ancients of the houſe of Iſrael do* IN THE DARK, *every man in the* CHAMBERS OF HIS IMAGERY? In Egypt, to the particular idolatry of which country, it is plain, from his mentioning *every form of creeping thing and abominable beaſts*, the prophet in this place alludes, theſe dark ſecluded receſſes were called MYSTIC CELLS, and in them were celebrated the ſecret myſteries of Iſis and Oſiris, repreſented by the quadrupeds ſacred to thoſe deities, who, after all, as has been repeatedly aſſerted in this diſſertation, are only perſonifications of the SUN and MOON. Thoſe, who are ſtill inclined to contend for the ſuperior antiquity of Egypt above all nations of the earth, will, from this circumſtance, probably join with Warburton in inſiſting that the MITHRATIC RITES themſelves were eſtabliſhed in imitation of thoſe of Iſis and Oſiris. But ſince by Oſiris was ſymbolized the SOLAR SPHERE, and, by his affectionate conſort, Iſis, THE LUNAR ORB, illumined by his ray, or, as ſome mythologiſts explain it, the TERRESTRIAL GLOBE, made fruitful by his generative warmth, we muſt look for the origin

of

of this ſplendid devotion to that primæval coun-try where the hoſt of heaven, and the elements of nature were firſt venerated; and whence the Sabian ſuperſtition darted throughout the world that beam of tranſcendant, but deluſive, brightneſs which dazzled the eyes of the infatuated human race, and induced them to miſtake and adore the grand receptacle of light for the Source of Light himſelf! Before this volume ſhall be concluded, the ample retroſpect, which my ſubject will compel me to take of the Chaldaic theology and ſciences, will have a direct tendency to eſtabliſh the truth of the hypotheſis, which makes Chaldæa the original ſource of the Sabian error, and the central region in which it moſt vigorouſly flouriſhed. For, upon what other hypotheſis ſhall we account for the univerſal and immemorial prevalence of this ſuperſtition in every region of the earth; how ſhall we explain ſo ſingular a phænomenon as that the pyramidal temple, ſymbolical of the ſolar ray, ſhould riſe with almoſt as bold an elevation in Mexico, as in Egypt; and that the Peruvians ſhould adore the ſun with as much ardour as anciently did the Magi of Perſia and the Brahmins of India?

A

A MORE PARTICULAR INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF THE MYSTERIOUS THEOLOGICAL RITES, ANCIENTLY CELEBRATED IN THE CAVERNS OF SALSETTE AND ELEPHANTA; AND AN ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN THE ÆRA IN WHICH, AND THE PEOPLE BY WHOM, THOSE CAVERNS WERE FABRICATED.

The GENIUS OF ANTIQUITY delighted in MYSTERY. Dark and ſecret as were the ſubterraneous vaults and woody receſſes, in which the ſages of the Eaſt took up their reſidence, were the doctrines there promulgated. Their theology was veiled in allegory and hieroglyphics; their philoſophy was involved in a circle of ſymbols. All the ſublime wiſdom of Aſia, however, was concentrated and diſplayed in the CAVE OF MITHRA, which, we have obſerved from Porphyry, repreſented THE WORLD, and contained expreſſive emblems of the various elements of nature.

I have offered very cogent arguments to prove, that the excavations of Salſette and Elephanta were no other than ſtupendous temples, in which the rites of that deity, though proba-

 bly

bly under a different appellation, were performed. As corroborative evidence of my assertions in that respect, I have given, in pages 197 and 198 preceding, the description of two august temples to the sun; the one of astonishing splendour, in Guzzurat, which was visited by Apollonius Tyanæus, in his voyage to India, at so remote a period as eighteen hundred years ago: and the other, affirmed, in the Ayeen Akbery, to have been erected by an ancient rajah, and not less remarkable for its magnitude and beautiful sculptures, than the former for its splendour. But since the caverns of India are undoubtedly of a date far anterior to the age of the second Zoroaster, or Zaratusht, who flourished in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, and who, according to Porphyry, "*First of all*, in the mountains adjacent to Persia, consecrated a natural cave in honour of Mithra, the father of the universe*:" and, since Zoroaster consecrated that cavern, *after his visit* to the Brahmins of India, and when he had already been instructed in the profound arcana of that astronomical science, for which they were so distinguished in antiquity; there arises, from this

* Porphyrius De Antro Nympharum, p. 254.

collec-

collective evidence, proof little less than demonstrative, that certain mysterious rites and ceremonies, congenial with their astronomical and theological speculations, were instituted and celebrated in these caverns, at a period prior to those celebrated in any of the neighbouring regions. Although the circumstances, above stated, are highly in favour of such an hypothesis, yet it might appear presumptuous in me to assert, that these mysterious celebrations were the *real origin* of ALL THOSE MYSTIC RITES which, in succeeding ages, throughout Asia, as well as Europe, in Persia, in Greece, and in Rome, passed under the various denominations of Mithriac, Orphic, Eleusinian, and Bacchic; and the more so, because a very profound critic in ancient Egyptian literature*, has asserted, as an incontrovertible fact, that the most early mysteries instituted in the world, were those of Egypt in honour of Isis and Osiris. When, however, we consider the high and acknowledged antiquity of the GEETA, and other Sanscreet productions, in which those mysteries are evidently glanced at; when we attend to the form in which the caverns themselves are excavated, and compare

* See Warburton's Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 133.

their

them with what we read in ancient authors, of the form of the Egyptian and Grecian temples, supernal or subterranean: above all, when we consider the hieroglyphic sculptures, and astronomical symbols, with which both the Egyptian and Indian temples were adorned, we possibly shall not be over-hasty in acceding to the positive assertion of that learned but dogmatical writer. Indeed, an hypothesis directly subversive of Warburton's, may with every appearance of reason be maintained; and before this volume shall be concluded, very convincing testimony may result from this investigation, that the mysteries of both Osiris and Mithra, are only copies of the ancient worship of Surya, the SOLAR FIRE, which originally was adored in Chaldæa, or Syria, as the noblest object in nature, and as the purest symbol of Deity in the whole extent of creation.

The subject itself alludes to periods too remote, not to be involved in the deepest obscurity. It is principally by analogy that our researches must be guided, and our decision regulated. I proceed, therefore, to shew, that, in these caverns, apartments were constructed, exactly similar, and symbols were elevated, uniformly correspondent with those which were anciently provided

vided in the myſtic cells of Egypt, and in the gloomy ſubterraneous receſſes ſacred in Greece and Rome to Ceres and Bacchus. Plutarch,* who travelled into Egypt for the purpoſe of obtaining information upon the ſubject, and who has thoroughly inveſtigated and explained the doctrines inculcated by the prieſts of that country, concerning Iſis and Oſiris, in regard to the form of their temples, in which theſe myſteries were performed, expreſly deſcribes them, as, in one place, *ανειμενων εις πτερα και δρομους υπαιθριους και καθαρους*, extending into long wings, and fair and open avenues; and, in another, *κρυπτα και σκοτια κατα γης εχοντων ϛολιϛηρια Θηβαιοις εοικοτα και σηκοις*, as having ſecret and gloomy ſubterraneous veſtries, reſembling the adyta of the Thebans. Exactly thus arranged were the Indian caverns. Mr. Hunter informs us, that, on entering Elephanta, you are led, firſt of all, into a feerandah, or piazza, which extends from eaſt to weſt ſixty feet; that its breadth from north to ſouth is ſixteen feet; and that the body of the cave is on every ſide ſurrounded by ſimilar feerandahs,"† and, in reſpect to its

 dark

* Plutarch, de Iſide et Oſiride, p. 639. Steph. Edit.
† Archæologia, vol. vii. p. 287.

dark recesses, Niebuhr observes: "Près de D, (sur le plan,* tab. 3.) il y a des appartemens obscurs; où, dans la saison que j'ai été voir ce temple, il y avoit encore de l'eau, qui vient fort à point aux vaches qui se rendent ici. Près d'E, il y a un grand appartement pareillement obscur." With respect to the symbols that adorned the mystic cell of Egypt, they are all supposed to be accurately arranged in that celebrated monument of antiquity, called the ISIAC or BEMBINE TABLE, which exhibits at one view, under various bestial and human figures, the deities adored in Egypt, but which, as has been conjectured by those learned antiquarians, who have written concerning its age and design in a more particular manner, alludes to the mystic rites of Isis and Osiris. Of this curious and valuable remain, a short account from Pignorius, whose edition of it is in my possession, may not be unacceptable to my readers. It was a table of brass, four feet in length, and nearly of the same diameter; the ground-work of the plate consisted of a black enamel, with silver plates curiously inlaid, on which were engraved a variety of emblems, divided into different classes and compartments, with hieroglyphic characters intermixed; the center contained the human figures, or rather gods in human

* Voy. en Arab. tom. ii. p. 28. where see that plan.

human ſhape, ſome ſtanding, ſome in motion, ſome ſitting on thrones, to whom other human figures are making offerings, or performing ſacrifices. Two of theſe figures, diſtinguiſhed by the ſacred Ibis and the Hawk's head, are evidently intended for ISIS and OSIRIS; but even, without that diſtinction, the conſpicuous figure, which the ſacred *bull*, the known ſymbol of Oſiris, makes on this table, ſufficiently points out the deities, in illuſtration of *whoſe rites* it was deſigned. The border, that ſurrounds the whole, is crowded with figures of birds, beaſts, and fiſhes, agreeing very nearly, both in number and ſhape, with the various animals aſſerted by the ancients to have received divine homage in the different cities of Egypt. Before moſt of theſe are human figures, delineated in poſtures of profound adoration. This valuable relic of ancient art, on the plunder of Rome by the army of Charles the Fifth, about the year 1527, became the property of a common artificer,* and was ſold by him to Cardinal Bembo, by whoſe name it has ſince been frequently diſtinguiſhed. At the death of that cardinal, the TABLE OF ISIS came into the poſſeſſion of the

Duke

* Vide Pignorii MENSÆ ISIACÆ Expoſitio, p. 12. Edit. Amſt. 1669.

Duke of Mantua, in whofe family it was preferved as an ineftimable rarity, till the palace of Mantua was plundered of its immenfe treafure of curiofities by the imperial general in 1630, fince which period the original has not been heard of, though, owing to the zeal of thofe profound antiquaries, Pignorius and Montfaucon, the literary world is in poffeffion of two exact copies of it, with fome curious ftrictures by each of thofe writers. The figures of the gods, or deified mortals, in the middle of this table, might poffibly be intended for a reprefentation of thofe fculptures that adorned the body of the myftic temple, in the fame manner as the Indian deities, or god rajahs, are arranged along the center part of the walls of Elephanta; while the animals peculiar to Egypt, pourtrayed on the furrounding border, might, like thofe peculiar to India on the cornices of the fame temple-pagoda, be fymbols of the various conftellations; and the kneeling figures, emblematical of the worfhip paid to them.

After confidering the form and fome of the decorations, let us attend to the myfterious rites celebrated, and the doctrines themfelves propagated, in thefe facred receffes. I offer it, with diffidence, as my humble opinion, that

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the grand basis of all the theological dogmas inculcated, at least in those of India, was the Μετεμψυχωσις, or transmigration of the human soul, and I am so fortunate as to be able to support that opinion by the express declaration of Porphyry, that the Metempsychosis was one of the first doctrines taught εν τοις τυ Μιθρυ μυστηριοις, in the mystic rites of Mithra, which is only the Asiatic appellation of the African Osiris. Now the Metempsychosis was a doctrine invented by the philosophers of the ancient world, for the direct purpose of vindicating the mysterious ways of Providence, and removing all impious doubts concerning the moral attributes of the deity; which, if permitted to take root, they knew must have been attended with the most baneful effects in society. But the doctrine of the existence of the human soul in a *prior* state naturally induced the supposition of its existence in a *future* sphere of action; and, while those diligent observers of mankind beheld the unequal distribution of human happiness and misery, while they beheld VIRTUE frequently groaning under the bondage of oppression, and VILLAINY as frequently clothed in regal purple, they were not only confirmed themselves in that judgement, but endeavoured to impress the awful truth

truth upon the minds of others. If this argument ſhould not hold good in regard to *all* the philoſophers of Greece and Rome, as in the caſe of certain bold Sceptics, and preſumptuous Sophiſts among them, the little knowledge I have acquired of the theologic ſentiments, of the inflexible virtue, and ſevere penances, of the Hindoo philoſophers, has convinced me, that to *them* it is perfectly applicable. The profeſſed deſign, then, both of the Indian, the Egyptian, and Eleuſinian, myſteries, was to reſtore the fallen ſoul to its priſtine ſtate of purity and perfection; and the INITIATED in thoſe myſteries were inſtructed in the ſublime doctrines of a ſupreme preſiding Providence, of the immortality of the ſoul, and of the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate. But the Brahmans, in their profounder ſpeculations on the being and attributes of God, initiated their pupils into myſteries ſtill more refined: they inculcated upon their minds the neceſſity, reſulting as a natural conſequence from that doctrine, of not only reſtraining the violence of the more boiſterous paſſions, but of entirely ſubduing the groſs animal propenſities by continued acts of abſtinence and mortification, and of ſeeking that intimate communion of ſoul with the great Father of the univerſe,

which

which when at its moſt elevated point of holy tranſport, is in India denominated *the abſorbed ſtate*. In India, I ſay, for this Ενθυσιασμος of the ſoul, thoſe mortifications of the body, and that ſubjugation of the paſſions, ever have been, and are at this day, carried to ſuch a height of extravagance as is abſolutely inconceivable by thoſe who have not been ſpectators of it, and is ſuch as far exceeds the moſt boaſted auſterities of Romiſh penitents. I ſhall, in the ſucceeding chapter, lay before the reader ſome circumſtances of voluntary penance undergone by the YOGEES, or devotees of India, that cannot fail to excite equal horror and aſtoniſhment in his mind. For the preſent I ſhall content myſelf with giving a few paſſages, that relate to the Indian doctrine of the Metempſychoſis and the Unity of God, from the three Sanſcreet publications, ſo often alluded to in the courſe of this diſſertation; ſince thoſe publications are doubtleſs the moſt authentic ſource of all poſſible information upon Indian antiquities; and ſince one of them, the GEETA, was unqueſtionably written in the very earlieſt ages of the world, and, at all events, many centuries before the ages of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato. In that ſublime Epiſode, which, Mr. Wilkins informs us, the Brahmins conſider

ſider as the repoſitory "of all the grand myſteries of their religion,"* the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis was probably firſt promulgated to mankind in the following paſſages. "As *the ſoul*, in this mortal frame, findeth *infancy, youth,* and *old age*; ſo, in ſome future frame, will it find the like." Bhagoat-Geeta, page 36.

"As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even ſo the ſoul, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new." "Death is certain to all things which are ſubject to birth, and regeneration to all things which are mortal." "The former ſtate of beings is unknown, the middle ſtate is evident, but their future ſtate is not to be diſcovered." Ibid, page 37. In theſe paſſages, the doctrine of the tranſmigration itſelf is clearly eſtabliſhed; let us conſider it in the aſcending ſcale, as holding out a reward for virtuous actions. "A man, whoſe devotions have been broken off by death, having enjoyed, for an immenſity of years, the rewards of his virtues in the regions above, at length is born again in ſome reſpectable family; or, perhaps, in the houſe of ſome learned YOGEE." Ibid, page 67. This ſpecies of devotees, whoſe preſcribed rotine of pe-
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* Preface to the Geeta, p. 23.

nance and prayer has not been fully completed, ſeems alluded to in another part of the Geeta, under the character of thoſe, " who obtain the regions of Eeendra, the prince of celeſtial beings, in which (inferior) heaven (as in Mahomed's paradiſe) they feaſt upon celeſtial food and divine enjoyments; and, when they have partaken of that ſpacious heaven for a while, in proportion to their virtues, they ſink again into this mortal life." P. 80. " Wiſe men, who have abandoned all thought of the fruit which is produced from their actions; (that is, who are actuated by a total indifference in regard to terreſtrial concerns, and are abſorbed in contemplation of the Deity,) are freed from the chains of birth, and go to the regions of eternal happineſs." P. 40. " The YOGEE, or devotee, who, labouring with all his might, is purified of his offences, and, AFTER MANY BIRTHS, MADE PERFECT, at length goeth to the *ſupreme abode*." Ibid, p. 67 " Know, O Arjun, that all the regions, between this and the *abode of Brahm*, afford but a tranſient reſidence; but he, who findeth me, returneth not again to mortal birth." P. 75. Let us now conſider the doctrine of the Metempſychoſis in the deſcending ſcale, or as a puniſhment of vicious actions. " There are two kinds of deſtiny prevailing

prevailing in the world; the divine deſtiny is for MOKSH, or eternal abſorption in the divine nature, and the evil deſtiny confineth the ſoul to mortal birth. Thoſe, who are born under the influence of the evil deſtiny, know not what it is to proceed in virtue or recede in vice; they ſay the world is without beginning, without end, and without an Eeſwar, (ſupreme God;) that all things are conceived by the junction of the ſexes, and that LOVE is the only cauſe." The principles of the SEEVA BUKHT ſeem here to be cenſured by Kreeſhna, who, we have often before obſerved, is the incarnate repreſentative of the very deity, VEESHNU, by whoſe name the other great ſect of Hindoſtan is diſtinguiſhed. " Theſe LOST SOULS, and men of little underſtandings, having fixed upon this viſion, are born of dreadful and inhuman deeds, for the deſtruction of mankind; they truſt to their carnal appetites, [moſt probably the true ſource of the devotion paid to the *Lingam*,] which are hard to be ſatisfied, are hypocrites, and overwhelmed with madneſs and intoxication. Becauſe of their folly, they adopt falſe doctrines, and continue to live the LIFE OF IMPURITY; therefore I caſt down upon the earth thoſe furious abject wretches, thoſe evil beings, who thus deſpiſe me, into the

wombs

wombs of EVIL SPIRITS and UNCLEAN BEASTS. Being doomed to the wombs of ASOORS, (fallen rebellious ſpirits,) *from birth to birth*, at length, not finding me, they go into the moſt infernal regions." Geeta, pp. 115, 116, 117. In the infernal regions, however, they are not doomed to languiſh in miſery for ever, ſince the Hindoo ſyſtem of theology allows not of the doctrine of *eternal torments*; but, after a certain period, the delinquents are called forth again to begin anew the probationary journey of ſouls, and are all to be finally happy.

There is a very curious, though ſomewhat obſcure, paſſage, in the eighth diviſion of this moſt ancient collection of divine precepts, that ſtrongly corroborates the opinion, which I ventured to offer in page 213 preceding, that the ſeven BOOBUNS, or ſpheres of purification, through which, according to Mr. Halhed, the tranſmigrating ſoul is doomed to paſs, had a direct alluſion to the ſeven planets: it is as follows. "Thoſe holy men, who are acquainted with Brahm, departing this life in the fiery light of day, in the *bright ſeaſon of the moon*, within the ſix months of the ſun's northern courſe, go unto him; but thoſe who

depart in the gloomy night of *the moon's dark season*, and whilst the sun is yet within the southern path of his journey, ascend for a while into the regions of the moon, and again return into *mortal birth.*" Ibid. p. 76.

To this prevailing doctrine of the Metempsychosis, a doctrine indisputably propagated in the schools of India long before it was promulged in those of the Egyptian and Grecian philosophers, a variety of expressions occurring in a drama, exhibited, according to an author by no means favourable to the high chronological claims of the Brahmins, at the court of an Indian monarch, above 2000 years ago,* and representative of men and manners, who flourished a thousand years before even that period, decidedly point. "In thy *passage over this earth*, where the paths are now high, now low, and the true path seldom distinguished, the traces of thy feet must needs be unequal; but virtue will press thee right onward." Sacontala, p. 49. "Perhaps," says the king Dushmanta, "the sadness of men, otherwise happy, on seeing beautiful forms and listening to sweet melody, arises from some faint remembrance of past joys and the

* See the Preface to Sacontala, p. 9.

the traces of connections *in a former state of existence*." Ibid. p. 55. In the following passage, we not only find this doctrine glanced at, but the strange sentiments entertained by the Hindoos, relative to the earth and its seven deeps, as described in the geographical treatise, authentically displayed. Of the infant son of Dushmanta, the divine Casyapa thus prophetically speaks: "Know, Dushmanta, that his heroic virtue will raise him to a dominion e[illegible] tended from sea to sea: before he has pass[illegible] *ocean of mortal life*, he shall rule, un[illegible] in combat, *this earth with seven pen*[illegible] p. 97. As, in the extract from t[illegible] reader has been made acquainted [illegible] Endra has an inferior heave[illegible], or par[illegible] is appointed for the residence of t[illegible] whose penance has not been fully com[illegible]ed; so, in the Sacontala, we read of "the [illegible] heaven, and central palace of Veeshnu." [illegible] which proves their belief in a succession [illegible] lestial mansions. The following passage, describing the occupations of the Brahmin candidate for perfection, is so highly illustrative of what has been before remarked concerning the sacred baths of purification, and consecrated groves and caverns, that I cannot avoid transcrib-

ing it. "It becomes pure ſpirits to feed on balmy air, in a *foreſt* blooming with trees of life; to bathe in rills dyed yellow with the golden duſt of the Lotos, and to fortify their virtue in the myſterious *bath*; to meditate in *caves*, the pebbles of which are unblemiſhed gems; and to reſtrain their paſſions, even though nymphs of exquiſite beauty ſmiled around them: in this foreſt alone is attained the ſummit of true piety, to which other hermits in vain aſpire." Geeta, p. 88.

It is remarkable, that this holy grove, the retreat of Brahmin hermits, is deſcribed as being ſituate in the mountains of HEEMAKOT, which is the Sanſcreet name of IMAUS, that is, in that very range of mountains of which Naugracut forms a part, and in which I have already aſſerted the Brahmin religion once flouriſhed in its greateſt vigour. "That mountain," ſays Matali, the charioteer of Eendra, "is the mountain of Gandharvas, named Heemakot: the univerſe contains not a more excellent place for the ſucceſsful devotion of the pious." P. 87. In the ſame page, there follows a deſcription of a devotee in the act of penance, which is in the higheſt degree intereſting and affecting; and will hereafter be cited by me, as a proof to what

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an exttreme point of ſeverity they carried thoſe penitentiary tortures which they voluntarily inflicted on themſelves, to obtain abſorption in BRAHME, or, in other words, eternal happineſs.

The laſt paſſage which I ſhall extract from the Sacontala, relative to the journey of the migrating ſoul, forms the concluding ſentence of that beautiful drama, and is more deciſive than any yet adduced: "May Seeva, with an azure neck and red locks, eternally potent and ſelf-exiſting, avert from me the pain of another birth in this periſhing world, *the ſeat of crimes and of puniſhment.*" Ibid. p. 98.

That ancient and celebrated compoſition of VEESHNU SARMA, the Heetopades, is not leſs expreſs upon the ſubject of the Metempſychoſis. "It is ſaid, fate is nothing but the deeds committed in *a former ſtate of exiſtence*; wherefore it behoveth a man vigilantly to exert the powers he is poſſeſſed of." Heetopades, p. 6. This paſſage ſeems to furniſh us with an explanation of the word deſtiny, in a preceding extract from the Geeta; for if that word be underſtood in a literal ſenſe, all human exertions muſt be of little avail. Mr. Wilkins explains the paſſage in this manner in a ſhort note, in

which

which he ſays: "It is neceſſary to inform the reader, that many of the Hindoos believe this to be a place of rewards and puniſhments, as well as of probation. Thus, good and bad fortune are the fruits of good and evil deeds committed in a former life; therefore, to prevent the latter in a future life, the author aſſerts, It behoveth a man," &c. Ibid. p. 296. "What elſe, my friend, can this misfortune be, but the effect of the evil committed in a *prior ſtate of exiſtence?* Sickneſs, ſorrow, and diſtreſs, bonds and puniſhment, to corporeal beings, *are fruits of the tree of their own tranſgreſſions.*" P. 25. "In this world, *raiſed up for our purification, and to prevent our wandering in the regions below,* the reſolution to ſacrifice one's own life to the ſafety of another is attained by the practice of virtue." Ibid. p. 229. "The diſſolution of a body foretelleth *a new birth*; thus, the coming of death, which is not to be paſſed over, *is as the entrance into life.*" Ibid. p. 270.

Finally, let it be obſerved, that Mr. Wilkins explains the term Salvation, as "an union with the univerſal Spirit of God, and *final exemption from mortal birth.*" Heetopades, p. 299.

After having produced theſe paſſages relative to the tranſmigration of the ſoul through the various animal manſions, let us conſider the Metempſychoſis in a ſtill more exalted point of view; let us trace the progreſs of the ſoul up the grand ſidereal LADDER of ſeven GATES, and through the revolving ſpheres, which, it has been obſerved, are called in India the BOOBUNS of purification. That the Hindoos actually entertained notions on this ſubject entirely conſentaneous with thoſe propagated by the inſtitutor of the Mithratic myſteries is evident from the conciſe, but obſcure, paſſage which has juſt been cited. If, however, in my humble attempt farther to illuſtrate this ancient dogma of the Indian ſchool, I ſhould not be able to produce ſo many extracts as directly elucidatory of this as of the former ſubject from the GEETA, I am in hopes the very curious and intereſting intelligence, which I am now about to lay before the reader, and which merits his moſt attentive conſideration, will, in a great meaſure, make amends for that defect. We muſt, therefore, once more revert to the hallowed cavern of the Perſian deity, and to the page of Porphyry, who is the beſt expoſitor of the Mithratic theology. Porphyry himſelf was one of the profoundeſt

critics and ſcholars that the ſchools of Greece ever bred, and deeply initiated in all the myſtic rites of the ancient recondite philoſophy and abſtruſe metaphyſics. He acquaints us, that, "according to Eubulus, Zoroaſter, firſt of all, among *the neighbouring mountains of Perſia*, conſecrated a natural cave, adorned with flowers* and watered with fountains, in honour of MITHRA, the father of the univerſe. For, he thought a cavern an emblem of the world, fabricated by MITHRA; and, in this cave, were many geometrical ſymbols, arranged in the moſt perfect ſymmetry and placed at certain diſtances, which ſhadowed out the elements and climates of the world."† Porphyry, in the preceding part of this beautiful treatiſe, had informed his readers that the ancients conſidered the world as juſtly typified by a cavern, alluding both to the earthy and ſtony particles of which it is compoſed as well as its obſcurity and concave form; and that the Perſians, intending myſtically to repreſent the deſcent of the ſoul into an inferior nature, and its ſubſequent aſcent into the intellectual

* Ανθηρον, floridum. I know not how otherwiſe to tranſlate the word, and yet it appears ſingular enough that a dark and barren cave ſhould be adorned with flowers.

† Vide Porphyrius de Antro Nympharum, p. 254, edit. Cantab. octavo, 1655.

intellectual world, initiated the prieſt, or candidate in the Mithratic rites, in caverns, or places ſo fabricated as to reſemble them. After the example of Zoroaſter, he adds, it was the cuſtom of other nations in ſucceeding ages to perform initiatory rites in dens and caverns, natural or artificial; for, as they conſecrated temples, groves, and altars, to the celeſtial gods; but, to the terreſtrial gods and heroes, altars alone; and, to the ſubterraneous deities, vaults and cells, ſo to the WORLD they dedicated ἀντρα και σπηλαια, caves and dens. Hence, he intimates, the Pythagoreans and the Platoniſts took occaſion to call this world *the dark cavern of the impriſoned ſoul.* Plato, in the ſeventh book of his republic, in which he treats of the condition of man in the natural world, expreſſly ſays, Behold men, as if dwelling in a ſubterranean cavern: and he compares this terrene habitation to the gloomy reſidence of a priſon, through which the ſolar light, imitated by the fires that glow in the receſſes of the cavern, ſhines with a bright and vivifying ray. The Homeric cave of the nymphs, which is the particular ſubject of his eſſay, was ſacred to the NAIADS, becauſe they preſided over fountains; thoſe fountains, which, ever bubbling up in the caverns, were

only the myſtic emblem of the intellectual waters which ſweeten and purify the ſoul contaminated with guilt. The fountains were alſo doubtleſs typical of the watery element, as was the fire of the great IGNEOUS PRINCIPLE, that ſubtle, active, ethereal, and reſiſtleſs ſpirit, which, diffuſed throughout the univerſe, embraces and animates its whole extent. The humid exhalations, which ariſe from the confluent waters, are an emblem of the fourth element, the air; while their bland and genial vapours ſerve as nouriſhment to the ethereal beings who hover round, the guardian genii of the ſolemn retreat. To deſcribe the marble urns and conſecrated vaſes for the reception of the purifying honey, an article ſtill of great requeſt in the libations and other theological rites of India, and the veſtments of purple woven by the nymphs, all myſtical emblems uſed in the rites of initiation, and explained by Porphyry, would be of leſs immediate utility than to conſider the aſtronomical ſymbols, of which, as I have curſorily ſtated from another of their moſt celebrated philoſophers, they were by no means deſtitute in the repreſentation of the ſtages of the Metempſychoſis. From that author we learned that they erected in theſe caverns a high ladder,

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which had SEVEN GATES, according to the number of the planets through which the ſoul gradually aſcended to the ſupreme manſion of felicity. I muſt here obſerve that the word GATE, which is a part of Aſiatic palaces by far the moſt conſpicuous and magnificent, and upon adorning of which immenſe ſums are often expended, is an expreſſion, that, throughout the Eaſt, is figuratively uſed for the manſion itſelf. Indeed it ſeems to be thus denominated with ſingular propriety, ſince, as thoſe of my readers who have reſided in Aſiatic regions well know, it is under thoſe GATES that converſations are holden, that hoſpitality to the paſſing traveller is diſpenſed, and the moſt important tranſactions in commerce frequently carried on. Captain Hamilton, giving an account of Fort St. George, obſerves, " that the GATE of that town, called the ſea-gate, being very ſpacious, was formerly the common exchange, where merchants of all nations reſorted about eleven o'clock to treat of buſineſs or merchandiſe "* Aſtronomy, deriving its birth in Aſia, and exploring nature and language for new ſymbols, ſoon ſeized upon this allegorical expreſſion as highly deſcriptive of her romantic ideas, and the ti-

* See Hamilton's Voyages, vol. i. p. 368.

tle was transferred from terrestrial houses to the spheres. Hence, in the Arabian astronomy, those constellations in the heavens, nearest which the moon, during her monthly revolution, remains every night, are called the MANSIONS OF THE MOON,* which, according to the Arabian computation, amount in number to twenty-eight, according to the Indian, to only twenty-seven, mansions; and these gates must, therefore, be considered as houses, or spheres, through which the soul passes in her course to the centre of light and felicity. It may here be remarked that the expression occurs frequently in holy writ, often in the former sense, and sometimes even in the astronomical allusion of the word. In the former acceptation we read, in Esther ii. 19, of the *Jew Mordecai sitting in the king's* GATE: in Lamentations v. 14, *that the elders have ceased from the* GATE: and, in Ruth iii. 11, it is used in a sense remarkably figurative; *all the* GATE (that is, house) *of my people know thou art virtuous.* In the second acceptation,

* These MANSIONS OF THE MOON are, from Mr Costard's Arabian astronomy, accurately marked on the celestial globe, made and sold by Mr. George Adams, in Fleet-street, whose obliging kindness to the author during the composition of a work, in which astronomy and theology are so intimately connected, he thus publicly and gratefully acknowledges.

ceptation, the word as well as the attendant ſymbol itſelf, to our aſtoniſhment, occur in the account of Jacob's viſion of the LADDER WHOSE TOP REACHED TO HEAVEN, and in the exclamation, THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN. This circumſtance cannot fail of exciting in the reader the utmoſt ſurpriſe, ſince it is hence manifeſted to have been an original patriarchal ſymbol, and will hereafter be brought by me in evidence that there was among the poſt-diluvian anceſtors of the human race an aſtronomy older than has yet been *proved* to exiſt, and poſſibly tinctured with ante-diluvian philoſophy. A ſimilar idea occurs in Iſaiah xxxviii. 10. *I ſhall go to the* GATES *of the grave*; and in Matthew xvi. 18. *The* GATES *of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it:* nor is it impoſſible but our bleſſed Lord himſelf might ſpeak in alluſion to the popular notion of the two aſtronomical GATES celeſtial and terreſtrial, when, in Matthew vii. 13, he ſaid, *Enter ye in at the ſtrait* GATE; *for, wide is the* GATE *and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: becauſe ſtrait is the* GATE *and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

But let us return to the Homeric cave, concerning the fabrication, intention, and ornaments,

naments, of which Porphyry has given us a disquisition, which, however obscure it may appear from the very partial information on this subject which has descended to us from the ancients, will more than sufficiently serve to convince us how deeply were blended together their profound astronomical and metaphysical speculations. This cave had two entrances or GATES, as they are called even by Homer; the one of which looked to the SOUTH, the other to the NORTH.

> Perpetual waters through the grotto glide,
> A lofty GATE unfolds on either side
> That, to the North, is pervious to mankind,
> The sacred South to immortals is consigned.

On this passage the great philosopher remarks, "There are two extremities in the heavens; viz. the winter solstice, than which no part of heaven is nearer to the South; and the summer solstice, which is situated next to the North. But the summer tropic, that is, the solstitial circle, is in Cancer, and the winter tropic in Capricorn. And, since Cancer is the nearest to the earth, it is deservedly attributed to the moon, which is itself proximate to the earth. But since the southern pole, from its great distance is invisible to us, Capricorn is assigned to Saturn, who is the highest

higheſt and moſt remote of all the planets. Again, the ſigns from Cancer to Capricorn are ſituated in the following order; the firſt is Leo, called, by aſtrologers, the Houſe of the SUN, afterwards Virgo, or the Houſe of Mercury, Libra, of Venus; Scorpio, of Mars; Sagittarius, of Jupiter; and Capricornus, or the Houſe of Saturn. But from Capricorn, in an inverſe order, Sagittarius is attributed to Saturn; Piſces to Jupiter; Aries to Mars; Taurus to Venus; Gemini to Mercury, and, laſt of all, Cancer to the MOON. From among the number of theſe, theologiſts conſider Cancer and Capricorn as two ports; Plato calls them two GATES. Of theſe, they affirm that Cancer is the gate through which *ſouls deſcend*, but Capricorn that through which they *aſcend*, and exchange a material for a divine condition of being. Cancer is, indeed, northern, and adapted to deſcent; but Capricorn is ſouthern, and accomodated to aſcent: and, indeed, the GATES of the cave, which look to the North, are with great propriety ſaid to be pervious to the deſcent of men; but the ſouthern GATES are not the avenues of the gods, but of ſouls aſcending to the gods. On this account the poet does not ſay it is the paſſage of the gods, but

but of immortals, which appellation is alſo common to our ſouls, whether in their whole eſſence, or from ſome particular and moſt excellent part only, they are denominated immortal. It is reported that Parmenides mentions theſe two PORTS in his book, concerning the nature of things; as likewiſe that they were not unknown to the Egyptians and Romans: for, the Romans celebrate their Saturnalia when the ſun is in Capricorn; and, during this feſtivity, the ſervants wear the ſhoes of thoſe who are free, and all things are diſtributed among them in common, the legiſlator intimating, by this ceremony, that thoſe, who are ſervants at preſent by the condition of their birth, will be hereafter liberated by the Saturnalian feaſt, and by the houſe attributed to Saturn, i. e. Capricorn; when, reviving in that ſign, and, being diveſted of the material garments of generation, they ſhall return to their priſtine felicity and to the fountain of life. But ſince the path beginning from Capricorn is retrograde, and pertains to deſcent; hence the origin of the word Januarius, or January, from *janua*, a gate, which is the ſpace of time meaſured by the ſun, while, returning from Capricorn towards the Eaſt, he directs his courſe

to

to the northern parts. But, with the Egyptians, the beginning of the year is not Aquarius, as among the Romans, but Cancer: for, the ſtar SOTHIS borders on Cancer, which ſtar the Greeks denominate Κυνος, or the dog. When this ſtar riſes, they celebrate the calends of the month, which begins their year; becauſe this is the place of the heavens where generation commences, by which the world ſubſiſts. On this account the doors of the Homeric cavern are not dedicated to the Eaſt and the Weſt, nor to the equinoctial ſigns, Aries and Libra, but to the North and South, and particularly to thoſe ports, or celeſtial ſigns, which are the neareſt of all to theſe quarters of the world: and this becauſe the preſent cave is ſacred to SOULS and to NYMPHS, the divinities of waters."*

A paſſage remarkably conſonant to the preceding occurs in Macrobius, a writer profoundly verſed in all the myſteries of the oriental world.

" Pythagoras (ſays that writer†) thought that the empire of Pluto began downwards from the milky way, becauſe ſouls falling thence

* Vide Porphyrius de Antro Nympharum, p. 265.

† Macrobius in Somnium Scipionis, lib. i. cap. 12, p. 61, edit. oct. Variorum. Lugd. Bat. 1670.

thence appear already to have receded from the gods. Hence he asserts that the nutriment of milk is first offered to infants, because their first motion commences from the Galaxy, when they begin to fall into terrene bodies. On this account, since those who are about to descend are yet in Cancer, and have not left the Galaxy, they rank in the order of gods; but when, by falling, they arrive at the Lion in this constellation they enter on the exordium of their future condition; because, in the Lion, the rudiments of birth and certain primary exercises of human nature commence. But Aquarius is opposite the Lion, and presently sets after the Lion rises; hence, when the sun is in Aquarius, funeral rites are performed to departed souls, because he is then carried in a sign which is contrary or adverse to human life." In a succeeding part Macrobius adds, "As soon, therefore, as the soul gravitates towards the body, in this first production of herself, she begins to experience a *material tumult*, that is matter flowing into her essence. And this is what Plato remarks in the Phædo, that the soul is drawn into the body, staggering with recent intoxication, signifying by this the new drink of matter's impetuous flood, through

through which the soul, becoming defiled and heavy, is drawn into a terrene situation. But the starry cup, placed between Cancer and the Lion, is a symbol of this mystic truth, signifying that descending souls first experience intoxication in that part of the heavens, through the influx of matter. Hence oblivion, the companion of intoxication, begins to creep into the recesses of the soul; for, if souls retained in their descent to bodies the memory of divine concerns of which they were conscious in the heavens, there would be no dissension among men concerning divinity. But *all, indeed, in descending, drink of oblivion; though some more, and others less.*"

This curious and mystical writer finally asserts. "The soul, therefore, falling with this first weight, from the zodiac and milky way into each of the subject spheres, is not only clothed with the accession of a luminous body, but produces the particular motions which it is to exercise in the respective orbs. Thus, in Saturn, it energises according to a ratiocinative and intellective power, which they call λογιστικον and θεωρητικον: in the sphere of Jove, according to the power of acting, which is called πρακτικον: in that of Mars, according to the order of courage, which is denominated

θυμικον:

θυμικον: in the orb of the SUN, according to a sensitive and plantastic nature, which they call αισθητικον and φανταστικον: but according to the motion of desire, which is denominated επιθυμητικον in the planet Venus, of pronouncing and interpreting what it perceives, which is called ερμηνευτικον in the orb of Mercury; and, according to a plantal nature and a power of acting on body, which is denominated φυτικον when it enters the lunar globe. And this sphere, as it is the last among the divine orders, so it is the first in our terrene situation. For, this body, as it is the dregs of divine concerns, so it is the first substance of an animal. And this is the difference between terrene and supernal bodies, (under which last I comprehend the heavens, the stars, and the other elements,) that the latter are called upwards to be the seat of the soul, and merit immortality from the very nature of the region, and an imitation of sublimity; but the soul is drawn down to these terrene bodies, and is, on this account, reported to die when it is inclosed in this fallen region and the seat of mortality. Nor ought it to cause any perplexity that we have so often made use of that term, the *death of the soul*, which we have pronounced to be IMMORTAL: for, the soul

ſoul is not extinguiſhed by its temporal demerſion; ſince, when it deſerves to be purified from the contagion of vice, through its entire refinement from body, it will be reſtored to the light of perennial life, and will return to its priſtine integrity and perfection."*

During the progreſs of this arduous undertaking it has been my misfortune to have *toiled alone*, or only aſſiſted by ſuch Sanſcreet publications as have yet ſeen the light under the ſanction of Sir William Jones, Mr. Halhed, and Mr. Wilkins. Had the two latter gentlemen, who are the beſt Sanſcreet ſcholars now in Europe, deigned to honour my infant work with the ſame notice which it has experienced from the great Orientaliſt, who is unfolding to the Aſiatic world the mild laws of this country, and diſpenſing juſtice according to that noble ſyſtem of juriſprudence, to the once-oppreſſed progeny of Hindoſtan, this production might poſſibly have come before the public leſs obſcured with error and leſs unworthy of their applauſe. Upon the preſent curious and intereſting topic, in particular, an occaſional communication with theſe celebrated Indian ſcholars would, doubtleſs, have enabled me to throw new light, and in a higher degree to gratify

excited

* Macrobius in Somn. Scip. cap. 12. p. 368. ejuſdem edit.

excited curioſity. Happily, however, not deprived of the advantage of their productions, I proceed to glean ſuch ſcattered fragments of information as appear to me elucidatory of the ſidereal migration of the ſoul aſpiring after the raptures of divine abſorption in BRAHME, the ſupreme good. "The Indians (ſays Mr. Halhed) have in all ages believed in the tranſmigration of ſouls, which they denominate KAYA-PREWAESH and KAYAPELUT: this latter term literally anſwers to the word Metempſychoſis. An ancient Shaſter, called the Geeta, written by Vyaſa, has a beautiful ſtanza upon the ſyſtem of the Tranſmigration, which he compares to a change of dreſs.* Their creed, in this reſpect, is, that thoſe ſouls which have attained to a certain degree of purity, either by the innocence of their manners or the ſeverity of their mortifications, are removed to regions of happineſs proportioned to their reſpective merits; but that thoſe, who cannot ſo far ſurmount the prevalence of bad example and the forcible degeneracy of the times as to deſerve

* I need not here cite the ſtanza, it has been already given. The author is confident Mr. Halhed will pardon the liberty he has taken, without aſſigning the reaſon, for inſerting VYASA for ADHAE DOOM, and hopes he ſhall experience, for any faults he may himſelf have committed, the candour of the ingenious tranſlator of the code.

deſerve ſuch a promotion, are condemned to undergo continual puniſhment in the animation of ſucceſſive animal forms, until, at the ſtated period, another renovation of the FOUR YUGS, or grand periods, ſhall commence upon the diſſolution of the preſent."

The preceding extracts have ſufficiently evinced the truth of theſe obſervations by Mr. Halhed. With reſpect to the ſidereal migration, we are obliged with the following additional intelligence.

"They ſuppoſe that there are fourteen BHOOBUNS, or ſpheres, ſeven below and ſix above the earth. The ſeven inferior worlds are ſaid to be altogether inhabited by an infinite variety of ſerpents. The earth itſelf is called BHOOR, and mankind who inhabit it BHOOR-LOGUE. The ſpheres, gradually aſcending thence, are, 1. BOBUR, whoſe inhabitants are called BOBUR-LOGUE; 2. the SWERGEH-LOGUE; 3. the MAHURR-LOGUE, 4. the JUNNEH-LOGUE; 5. the TUPPEH-LOGUE; 6. the SUTTEE-LOGUE." The term LOGUE, according to Mr. Holwell, ſignifies literally a people, a multitude, a congregation, and DEWTAH-LOGUE the angelic hoſt.*

* Holwell, vol. ii. p. 35.

The Bobur is the immediate vault of the visible heavens, in which the sun, moon, and stars, are placed. The Swergeh is the first paradise and general receptacle for those who merit a removal from the earth. The Mahurr-logue are the Fakeers and such persons as, by dint of prayer, have acquired an extraordinary degree of sanctity. The Junneh-logue are also the souls of pious and moral men, and beyond this sphere they are not supposed to pass without some uncommon merits and qualifications. The sphere of Tuppeh is the reward of those who have all their lives performed some wounderful act of penance and mortification, or who have died martyrs for their religion. The Suttee, or highest sphere, is the residence of Brahma and his particular favourites, whence they are also called Brahma-logue. This is the place of destination for those men who have never uttered a falsehood during their whole lives, and for those women who have voluntarily burned themselves with their husbands."*

To these fourteen spheres of reward and punishment the Geeta in various places directly, but obscurely, alludes. In that episode, Arjun,

* See the preface to the Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 46, edit. quarto, London, 1776.

jun, juſt ready to ſtain his ſword with the blood of his relatives, aſſembled to oppoſe him in the field of battle, is checked by the reflection that the regions of Naraka, the boo-buns of ſerpents, " are provided for thoſe who murder their relations." This, however, is not the only bitter reflection to which his painful ſituation gives birth; the baneful conſequences will extend to others, ſince the dead themſelves are affected by the crimes of the living. The forefathers of their ſlain brethren, " being deprived of the ceremonies of cakes and water offered to their manes, will ſink down into the *infernal regions*." Geeta, p. 3. The ceremony of the Stradha, which is here alluded to, has been explained before; to which I ſhall now add, from Mr. Wilkins upon the paſſage, that, in thoſe regions, the condemned are doomed to dwell " for a period *proportioned to their crimes*, after which they riſe again to inhabit the bodies of unclean beaſts." Both the aſtronomical term and the allegorical alluſion are in direct terms mentioned in the following paſſage. " There are three paſſages to NARAKA; luſt, anger, and avarice, which are the deſtroyers of the tranſmigrating ſoul; wherefore a man ſhould

avoid them; for, being freed from these GATES OF SIN, which arise from the influence of the TAMA-GOON, (those who inculcate the worship of departed spirits,) he advanceth his own happiness, and at length he goeth the JOURNEY OF THE MOST HIGH." Geeta, p. 118.

In the passages before-cited, the word *mansion*, or *abode*, is frequently used; and it has been proved, that the superior Boobuns are not less the mansions of departed piety, than those of Naraka are of the guilty. Concerning the superior Boobuns there is one or two of those extracts so very express, that I must be permitted to bring them again before the eye of the reader, in particular I wish him to re-peruse that passage in which Kreeshna tells Arjun, that ALL THE REGIONS between this and the ABODE of Brahma afford but a transient residence; and that in which the same incarnate deity declares, that the virtuous shall be rewarded with "the REGIONS OF EENDRA, the prince of celestial beings, in which HEAVEN they feast upon celestial food and divine enjoyment." Geeta, p. 80. "They, who are acquainted with day and night, know that the day of Brahma is as a thousand revolutions of the

YUGS,

YUGS,* and that his night extendeth for a thousand more: as, on the coming of that day, all things proceed from invisibility to *visibility*, so, on the approach of that night, they are all dissolved in that which is called *invisible*: even the universe itself, having existed, is again dissolved; and now again, on the approach of Brahma's day, by the same divine over-ruling necessity, it is re-produced. That which, upon the dissolution of all things beside, is not destroyed, must be superior and of another nature from that visibility: it is invisible and eternal. He who is thus called invisible and incorruptible, is even he who is called the SUPREME ABODE; which, men having once obtained, they never return to earth: that is my MANSION." Allusive, doubtless, to the transmigration of the soul through the seven sidereal abodes of spirits in the progress of purification, all finally terminating in the most sublime and exalted, Arjoon, in page 94 of the same episode, in this style of elevated piety, addresses the Supreme Being. "Thou, O

Z* 3 mighty

* The YUGS are certain grand periods, alluding to the revolutions of the heavenly bodies. they are in number four, and will be amply explained hereafter The vanity of the Brahmin chronologists has induced them to apply to terrestrial concerns the vast periods used in sidereal computation.

mighty Being, greater than Brahma, art the prime Creator! eternal God of gods! the world's MANSION! Thou art the incorruptible Being, diſtinct from all things tranſient! Thou art before all gods, the ancient POORUSH, and the ſupreme ſupporter of the univerſe! Thou knoweſt all things, and art worthy to be known! Thou art the SUPREME MANSION; and by thee, O infinite Form! the univerſe was ſpread abroad." In page 75, recently cited, occurs that very curious paſſage quoted in a former part of this diſſertation, as having an undoubted aſtronomical alluſion, and which I ſhall again inſert with the addition of the context, ſince it appears very evidently to inculcate a doctrine not only congenial with that of the Greek philoſophers, but with the hypotheſis of the two principles of LIGHT and DARKNESS, or rather of GOOD and EVIL, in the Perſian code of philoſophical theology. "I will now (continues Creeſhna) ſpeak to thee of that time in which, ſhould a devout man die, he will never return, and of that time, in which, dying, he ſhall return again upon the earth. Thoſe holy men who are acquainted with BRAHME, departing this life in the fiery light of the day, in the bright ſeaſon of the moon, WITHIN THE SIX MONTHS OF THE SUN'S NOR-

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THERN courſe, go unto him; but thoſe who depart in the gloomy night of the moon's dark ſeaſon, and whilſt THE SUN IS YET WITHIN THE SOUTHERN PARTS OF HIS JOURNEY, aſcend, for a while, into the regions of the moon, and again return to mortal birth. Theſe two, LIGHT and DARKNESS, are eſteemed the world's eternal ways. He, who walketh in the *former* path, (of light, or piety,) returneth not; whilſt he, who walketh in the *latter* path, (darkneſs, or evil,) cometh back again upon the earth." Geeta, p. 76.

Theſe are not the only paſſages in which the gradual aſcent of the ſoul through the planets, or ſpheres of purification, is plainly intimated in the Geeta. They are however ſufficient for our purpoſe, and, in proof that the Indians actually had, in the remoteſt æras, in their ſyſtem of theology, the ſidereal ladder of ſeven gates, ſo univerſally made uſe of as a ſymbol throughout all the Eaſt, I have now to inform the reader of the following circumſtance; — there exiſts at preſent, in the French king's library at Paris, a book of paintings entirely alluſive to the Indian mythology and the incarnations of Veeſhnu, in one of which is exhibited this very ſymbol, upon

which the ſouls of men are repreſented as aſcending and deſcending, according to the received opinion of the ſidereal Metempſychoſis in Aſia. Of this curious volume a friend at Paris has procured me very minute information, and I have hopes of preſenting my readers with a correct copy of this painting before theſe extenſive diſſertations ſhall have been concluded. Two other books, adorned with ſimilar paintings, illuſtrative of Indian ſubjects, which are in the poſſeſſion of the literati of this country, deſerve, in this place, particular notice. The firſt is that in the Bodleian library, preſented to the Univerſity of Oxford by Mr. Pope, and affirmed, in the letter of that author which accompanied the donation, to contain "one hundred and ſeventy-eight portraits of the Indian rajahs, continued down to Timur, and the Great Moguls his ſucceſſors, as far as Aurungzebe."* The account of this book by Mr. Cleland, prefixed to Dr. White's and Mr. Davy's tranſlation of the Inſtitutes of Timur, eſtabliſhes the authenticity of it; for, "that the pictures it contains are not fancy pictures there is this ſolid

* Theſe are the words of Mr. Pope's letter written in the year 1737, and inſerted in the Preface to the Inſtitutes of Timur.

ſolid reaſon to believe, it being well known that ſuch a ſet of pictures actually exiſts in the royal palace." He adds, "it is obſervable, that the Mooriſh or Mohamedan ſovereigns of Hindoſtan are, in this collection, diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of Gentoo deſcent by the faſhion of the ſkirts of their robes, which, in the Gentoos, hang on each ſide, cut at the bottom into an angular form, as all the rajahs wear them at this day for an enſign of royalty."* From this book I hope to obtain the permiſſion of the Univerſity to engrave the portraits of ſome of the more diſtinguiſhed characters that have ſwayed the imperial ſceptre of a people, who, with their auguſt ſovereigns, have been hitherto ſo little known; of a people, who, in the remote and beautiful regions of Hindoſtan, for many ages, ſeem to have ſhunned all intercourſe with their fellow-mortals, and, at preſent, are very inaccurately delineated on the hiſtoric page in proportion to the importance and extent of their vaſt empire in Aſia, to the conſummate wiſdom of their policy, and the diſtinguiſhed ſplendour of their exploits. The remaining volume, which merits our preſent notice, and will

* See the preface to Dr. White's Inſtitutes of Timur.

will claim our more particular attention hereafter, is that in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries in London, presented, I believe, by Mr. Hastings, and which, if I may judge from a survey of it, permitted me by the obliging attention of the secretary of that society, is entirely upon the subject of the nine incarnations of the god Veeshnu. In rather a transient review of its contents I was particularly struck with a minute delineation of the COURMA AVATAR, or Veeshnu's descent in the form of a tortoise to support the earth sinking in the ocean, and of the curious Indian historical fable of the Soors and Asoors churning that ocean with the mountain Mandar. Around this vast mountain the serpent ASOOKEE is represented as twined in dreadful folds, by way of a rope, at the head and tail of which those imaginary beings are pulling with all their might, to make the churned deep disgorge the precious things swallowed up in a certain great deluge, which, notwithstanding all sceptical opposition, was undoubtedly the deluge of Noah. The above circumstances must appear so very romantic to the reader, that, as some period will still elapse before I can proceed to the historical detail and explanation of the Avatars, I shall insert a few lines, illustrative of

of it from Mr. Wilkins's tranſlation of that part of the Mahabbarat in which it occurs, and which he will find in page 146 of the Geeta. This account, adduced immediately from ſuch high and reſpectable authority, will at once ſerve to gratify curioſity and reſcue myſelf from cenſure in enumerating particulars ſo wildly theological, but ſtill ſo abſolutely neceſſary to be known to the reader before he can obtain the full comprehenſion of the ancient Sanſcreet hiſtory of Hindoſtan; it will likewiſe afford a ſpecimen of the romantic ſtyle in which that firſt and moſt celebrated Indian hiſtory is written. Prefatory to this extract I muſt obſerve, that the Soors, being aſſembled in ſolemn conſultation upon the ſparkling ſummit of the great golden mountain MERU, or SOMMEIR, aſſerted, in the Geographical Diſſertation, to be ſituated in the centre of our globe, and to be of the altitude of at leaſt 16,000 YOJANS,* were meditating the diſcovery of the AMREETA, or water of immortality, under which allegory is ſhadowed out the re-animation of nature after the general deſolation made by the deluge. The ſea was to be deeply agitated by the impetuous

* The YOJAN is an ancient Indian meaſure, in extent about four miles.

petuous rotation of the mountain Mandar; but, as the united bands of Dewtahs were unable to remove this mountain, they went before Veeshnu, who was sitting with Brahma, and addressed them in these words: "Exert, sovereign beings, your most superior wisdom to remove the mountain Mandar, and employ your utmost power for our good." Veeshnu and Brahma having replied; "It shall be according to your wish:" HE, with the Lotos eye, directed the king of serpents to appear. Ananta arose, and was instructed in that work by Brahma, and commanded by Narayen to perform it. Then Ananta, by his power, took up that king of mountains together with all its forests and every inhabitant thereof; and the Soors accompanied him into the presence of the Ocean. whom they addressed, saying, "We will stir up thy waters to obtain the Amreeta," and the lord of the waters replied, "Let me also have a share, seeing I am to bear the violent agitations that will be caused by the whirling of the mountain." Then the Soors and Asoors spake unto Courma-rajah, the king of the tortoises, upon the strand of the ocean, and said, "My lord is able to be the supporter of this mountain." The tortoise replied, "Be it so!" and it was placed upon his back.

So the mountain being ſet upon the back of the tortoiſe, Eendra began to whirl it about as it were a machine. The mountain Mandar ſerved as a churn, and the ſerpent Vaſookee for the rope; and thus, in *former days*, did the Dewtahs, the Aſoors, and the Danoos, begin to ſtir up the waters of the ocean for the diſcovery of the Amreeta. The mighty Aſoors were employed on the ſide of the ſerpent's head, whilſt all the Soors aſſembled about his tail. Ananta, that ſovereign Dew, ſtood near Narayen.

They now pull forth the ſerpent's head repeatedly, and as often let it go: while there iſſued from his mouth, thus violently drawing to and fro by the Soors and Aſoors, a continual ſtream of fire, and ſmoke, and wind; *which aſcending in thick clouds replete with lightning, it began to rain down* upon the heavenly bands, who were already fatigued with their labour, whilſt a ſhower of flowers was ſhaken from the top of the mountain, covering the heads of all, both Soors and Aſoors. In the mean time *the roaring of the ocean, whilſt violently agitated* with the whirling of the mountain Mandar by the Soors and Aſoors, was like the bellowing of a mighty cloud. Thouſands of the various productions of the waters were torn to pieces by the mountain, and confounded with

with the briny flood; and every ſpecific being of the deep and all the inhabitants *of the great abyſs which is below the earth were annihilated*, whilſt, from the violent agitation of the mountain, the foreſt trees were daſhed againſt each other, and precipitated from its utmoſt height, with all the birds thereon; from the violent confrication of all which a raging fire was produced, involving the whole mountain with ſmoke and flame, as with a dark blue cloud and the vivid flaſh of lightning. The lion and the retreating elephant are overtaken by the devouring flames, and every vital being and every individual object are conſumed in the general conflagration. The raging flames, thus ſpreading deſtruction on all ſides, were at length quenched by a ſhower of cloud-borne water poured down by the immortal Eendra. And now a heterogeneous ſtream of the concocted juice of various trees and plants ran down into the briny flood. It was from this milk-like ſtream of juices, produced from thoſe ſtreams, trees, and plants, and a mixture of melted gold, that the Soors obtained their immortality."*

Concerning theſe extravagant mythological details of the Hindoos, I muſt remark, that however myſterious the allegory, and however wild

* Geeta, p. 146, 147, 148.

wild and romantic the language in which it is clothed, this fact may be depended upon, that there, in general, lies concealed at the bottom some physical meaning or deep theological truth. Divested of its inflated diction and fabulous incidents, the invention of an oriental fancy, what can this general and stupendous convulsion of nature; — the mountain buried in the tempestuous bosom of the ocean; that ocean roaring and raging amidst the conflict of contending elements; the torrents of descending rain poured down by Eendra, the Hindoo God of the firmament; the total annihilation of every living thing on the mountain, and of all the inhabitants of *the great abyss* which is below the earth; (an expression very similar to the Scripture-phrase of *all the fountains of the great deep*;)—what can all this accumulation of magnificent and dreadful images shadow out except the desolation of the earth during the period of the universal deluge; when the Soors and Asoors, who may be considered as the ætherial ministers of the divine vengeance, were commissioned to harrass the agitated globe? What can the incarnation of Veeshnu, the preserving power of India, in the form of a vast tortoise, which incarnation constitutes the second or COURMA AVATAR, to support the ponderous mass

maſs on the ſtrand of the ocean, portend, but the benevolent intervention of Providence, perſonified by the incarnation of Veeſhnu, to ſave from total deſtruction a periſhing world? Who is that phyſician ſo renowned in ancient Sanſcreet hiſtories, the great Dew Dhanwantaree, who at length roſe from the churned ocean, the white foam of which reſembled milk, bearing in his hand a ſacred vaſe full of the water of life, and who himſelf is even repreſented in ſome of thoſe hiſtories as a transformation of Veeſhnu, who, I ſay, is to be underſtood by that fictitious character, unleſs the venerable ſage who roſe from the ocean, who gave new life to his expiring ſpecies, and in his family upheld the human race: that pious patriarch, who, after his emerging from the hoary deep, *builded an altar unto the Lord*, and offered the *firſt grateful oblation* after the deluge; (circumſtances recorded amidſt the conſtellations of the Southern ſphere,) that mythologic character, who is repreſented upon it as the *ſacrificer of the beaſt*, that profound philoſopher whoſe knowledge of the ante-diluvian aſtronomy enabled him to form that ſphere, and who placed THE SHIP, by Grecian mythologiſts uſurped, and ridiculouſly called ARGO, there? The Greeks, however, remarkably corroborating my hypotheſis, denominated this aſteriſm

asterism of the SACRIFICER, CHIRON, whom Pliny describes " as the son of Saturn (TIME) and Phillira, the inventor of the BOTANICAL and MEDICAL art."* And justly may the SACRIFICER be denominated Chiron, that true Chiron of antiquity, though not of Grecian origin, nor the preceptor of Achilles; that great botanist, who first planted the vine and returned to the ground that infinite variety "*of medical herbs and innumerable seeds,*" which, in the ancient Sanscreet histories, and particularly in Sir William Jones's translation of the BHAGAVAT, MENU is represented as taking into the ark for the express purpose of renovating decayed vegetation after the deluge; that nobler CENTAUR, who was indeed born of a *cloud*, in the same manner as the Chinese Fohi is represented in their histories to have had a *rainbow* for his progenitor; who, as the name Centaur properly signifies, first tamed the fierce bull, and who, having taught mankind the use of agriculture, was thence not only represented in all the oriental mythologies by the apt symbol of the BULL, but, if M. Anquetil, in the Zend-Avesta, may be credited, in the ancient Persian histories, was called *l'homme-taureau.*† Such is the true meaning of this Avatar; and such, in my humble opinion, is the

* Plinii Nat. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 56.

† See M. Anquetil du Perron's Zend-Avesta, tom iii. p. 363.

true Danwantaree of India, who ſprang from the foam of the churned ocean, bearing the Amreeta, or vital ambroſia, to the renovated world. I would not be underſtood, however, to have aſſerted that Danwantaree and Noah are the ſame perſon, except in a mythological ſenſe; for, Menu, or Satyaurata, who was the author of the famous Inſtitutes, at firſt orally promulgated by that legiſlator, afterwards committed to writing, and called after him MENUMSRITI, is the undoubted and only genuine Noah of India; but I mean, that under the character of Danwantaree riſing from the ocean, this venerable perſonage is intended and ſymbolized. According to M. Sonnerat, he is generally depicted in the pagodas, ſacred to Veeſhnu, as a learned man, in profound meditation, with a book in his hand.

Sir William Jones, without favouring us with any farther explanation of his meaning, confeſſes himſelf to be of opinion, that a conſiderable portion of this particular Avatar relates to aſtronomy. For my own part, I entertain little doubt but that the ſerpent Aſookee, whoſe enormous body enfolded the globe, is no other than the celeſtial ſerpent, or dragon, whoſe baleful influence is repreſented in all oriental ſyſtems of aſtrology to be ſo fatal to the revolving ſpheres, or elſe that whimſical

repreſentation

representation of a ſtill more viſionary dragon, formed by the courſe of the moon near the ECLIPTIC, of whoſe BELLY, HEAD, and TAIL, is exhibited, in a preceding page, an aſtronomico-mythological engraving. By this allegory, do not the Brahmin aſtronomers mean to indicate that ſome dreadful poſition of the planetary orbs, which are often repreſented, in Sanſcreet writings, as perſonified Dewtahs, occaſioned the grand convulſion; or that ſome fatal ECLIPSE which ever happens near that region of the heaven where their fancies have fixed their imaginary dragon, portended and accompanied it? Surely the ſuppoſition of ſuch an event, as a ſecondary cauſe, proves neither bad theology nor deſpicable philoſophy to exiſt in Hindoſtan; for, notwithſtanding ſome difficulties in Whiſton's ſyſtem, that a comet paſſed at that remote æra near the orbit of the earth, and cauſed the inundation, that hypotheſis is not deſtitute of able advocates. But we ſee that, by this relation, a devouring fire, as well as a tempeſtuous ocean, contributed to the general devaſtation. Is it not poſſible, that ſome of the more ancient Sanſcreet books may contain, traditionally handed down, a genuine and circumſtantial relation of this awful event? But, if that ſhould not be the caſe, is not this account entirely conformable

to the ingenious conjectures of the great naturalist Mr. Whitehurst, who is decidedly of opinion, that fire, bursting from the internal regions of the earth, greatly contributed to bring on the dreadful catastrophe in which nature agonized, and a world was destroyed. Mr. Whitehurst does not stand single in this opinion. His supposition is corroborated by the greatest chemist of the age, WATSON, a name on which titles can confer no additional splendour. A more full investigation, however, of this point, and some others of equal novelty and importance to the theological and literary world, must be reserved for that portion of this history which treats of the cosmogony of the Hindoos.

Since the Avatars themselves, that is, the descents of the deity in a human form, may be considered as connected with, if not as originally giving birth to, the doctrine of the Metempsychosis; for, with the Indians, that deity is considered only as the *Anima Mundi*, or Soul of the World, of whom the particular definition in the Bhagavat is, that "HE IS EVERY WHERE ALWAYS;" it will not be thought entirely digressive, if, while upon this subject, I pursue somewhat farther the reflections to which the Courma-Avatar has given birth. Truth, therefore, compells me to add, to what has been already observed, that the

more

more minutely the *three first Avatars* are examined, the more directly will each of those Avatars be found to be illustrative of the great event above alluded to; while the united evidence, arising from them, reflects a light upon that event greater than has yet radiated upon it from any page of Gentile antiquity. "They all three," says the president of the Asiatic Society, "apparently relate to some stupendous convulsion of our globe from the fountains of the deep."* In direct proof of Sir William's assertion, I shall, in this place, somewhat prematurely, present the reader with a print, which I have had engraved from the China Illustrata of Kircher, of the first of those Avatars, and which was copied by one of the Roman missionaries from the walls of an Indian pagoda, on which the ten transformations of Veeshnu were delineated in the successive order in which they take place. In justice to myself I must remark, that this print properly belongs to the first volume of my history, in which all the Avatars are distinctly described, and most of them engraved; but as it is possible that the increased sum, at which I have been obliged to fix the price of these volumes, may unfortunately deprive me of the continued patronage, throughout the work, of some of my subscribers, I here, with grateful attention,

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. 235.

attention, ſubmit a duplicate of the plate for their particular accommodation and inſpection.

The following are in brief the outlines of the allegory, extracted from the Bhagavat, where may be found the paſſage from the ſame book cited above.

Near the cloſe of the laſt CALPA, (a period of duration of aſtronomical origin, and refering to the rate of the *preceſſion of the equinoxes*, but ſtated in the Surya Siddhanta as equal to a thouſand maha yugs, or grand revolutions,) BRAHMA, fatigued with the care of ſo many worlds, fell into a profound ſlumber. During this ſlumber of the creator, the ſtrong dæmon, or giant, Hayagriva, came near him, and ſtole the VEDAS; thoſe four ſacred volumes which originally flowed from the lips of the quadruple deity. With this ineſtimable treaſure he retired into the deep and ſecret boſom of the ocean; and, reſolving never to ſurrender the booty he had ſecured, ſwallowed the ſtolen Vedas. Deprived of the vigilant care of Brahma, the world fell into diſorder; while, no longer guided by the light that emanated from the ſacred books, the human race became, to the laſt degree, corrupt. They were all conſequently deſtroyed in a vaſt deluge, except a certain pious king and his family, which, in very ſingular conformity to the relation of ſacred writ,

conſiſted

consisted of *seven persons*, who floated upon the waters in a vessel fabricated according to the express direction of Veeshnu. For, this pious monarch, one day performing his devotions on the shore of the ocean, was forewarned of the approaching calamity by that preserving deity; and having prepared a vessel, as commanded, at the appointed time, Veeshnu appeared again in the form of a fish, "blazing like gold, and extending a million of leagues, with one stupendous horn," to which the king fastened the vessel by a cable composed of a vast serpent, and was thus towed in safety along the surface of the raging element. When the waters abated, he and his companions were again safely landed. Veeshnu, then re-plunging into the ocean, slew, in conflict, the tremendous dæmon Hayagriva, and, rending open the monster's belly, recovered three of the Vedas, but the fourth, according to the allegory, was digested. The plate annexed discovers Veeshnu rising from the ocean after vanquishing the dæmon, whose head, decorated with horns like those of all other princely personages in oriental mythology, is seen floating upon the waves below. Veeshnu appears as if presenting the sacred books, which he had thus recovered, to Brahma, who is discerned above. The third or Bara Avatar is not less pointedly

pointedly allusive to the same awful event. In this *incarnation* Veeshnu assumes the form of a BOAR, and lifts up upon his huge tusks the ponderous globe, which another dæmon, (an agent ever present in Hindoo mythology,) equally gigantic and malignant, after rolling it up like a scroll, had carried away on his shoulders, and buried deep in the abyss.

The meaning of all this is so obvious as to preclude the necessity of insisting, in this place, how clearly the assertion of Sir William Jones, as to the three first Avatars, is demonstrated. I return, therefore, to the consideration of the curious doctrine, to which, probably, that of the Avatars originally gave birth.

From the collective evidence exhibited in the preceding pages, the assertion with which I commenced these particular strictures on the Metempsychosis, that the professed design of it was to restore the fallen soul to its pristrine state of purity and perfection, is proved beyond contradiction. Thus, an interesting and astonishing prospect unfolds itself to our view. Their sacred writings, we see, represent the whole universe as an ample and august theatre for the probationary exertion of millions of beings, who are supposed to be so many spirits degraded from the high honours of angelic distinction, and condemned to ascend, through various gradations of toil

and

and suffering, until they shall have reached that exalted sphere of perfection and happiness, which they enjoyed before their defection. Animated by the desire of obtaining that final boon, and fired by all the glorious promises of the Vedas, the patient Hindoo smiles amidst unutterable misery, and exults in every dire variety of voluntary torture. In the hope of expiating former crimes by adequate penance, and of regaining speedily that fancied elysium, he binds himself to the performance of vows which make human nature shudder and human reason stagger. He passes whole weeks without the smallest nourishment, and whole years in painful vigils. He wanders about naked as he came from the womb of his parent, and suffers, without repining, every vicissitude of heat and cold, of driving storm and beating rain. He stands with his arms crossed above his head, till the sinews shrink and the flesh withers away. He fixes his eye upon the burning orb of the sun, till its light be extinguished and its moisture entirely dried up.* It is impossible to read the

 following

* Every circumstance enumerated above is particularized and was seen by Tavernier in India. See Voyages de Tavernier, tom. iv. p. 115. edit. 1713, with an engraving annexed. I shall, in a succeeding page, state some still more wonderful, but well authenticated, relations of Indian mortification.

following minute deſcription of one of theſe devotees in the act of ſtationary penance, as given in the Sacontala, without ſhuddering Every circumſtance enumerated fills the mind with increaſing horror, and freezes the aſtoniſhed reader to a ſtatue, almoſt as immoveable as the ſuffering penitent. Duſhmanta aſks; "Where is the holy retreat of Maricha?"— Matali *replies*, "A little beyond that grove, where you ſee a pious YOGEE, motionleſs as a pollard, holding his thick buſhy hair, and *fixing his eyes on the ſolar orb*.—Mark, his body *is half covered with a white ant's edifice*, made of raiſed clay; *the ſkin of a ſnake* ſupplies the place of his ſacerdotal thread, and part of it girds his loins; a number of *knotty plants* encircle and wound his neck, and *ſurrounding birds neſts* almoſt cover his ſhoulders." Sacont. p. 87. But I am anticipating a ſubject upon which I muſt hereafter enlarge, when I come to compare the ancient Gymnoſophiſt and the modern Fakeer. But to what ſource is this doctrine of ſpirits fallen from their original rectitude, a doctrine, which not only infected India but all the eaſtern world, to be traced? One probable ſource of it has been already ſtated to originate from the anxiety of the ancient philoſophers,

losophers, to justify the divine attributes, and vindicate the ways of God to man; but the more probable source seems to have been some obscure and corrupted tradition of the *fallen angels*, handed down through successive generations from the great progenitor of the human race, and his immediate descendants, with whom celestial spirits are represented as frequently conversing, and to whom they might, as a friendly warning, have imparted the intelligence. If this mode of accounting for the origin of so singular a doctrine should appear unsatisfactory, much more so must every other prove; for, after all, what belongs to past or future scenes of existence can only be known to mankind through the medium of revelation.

No precepts so severe as these were indeed taught by the divines and philosophers of Egypt and Greece. Neither in the mystic cells of the former, nor in the Eleusinian sanctuaries of the latter, was the doctrine of the Metempsychosis carried to such an extreme point of speculative investigation as in the sacred caverns of India; but that the precepts taught, and the rites celebrated, in both countries, were in a striking degree similar, will be more clearly manifested by the succeeding enumeration

of particular parallel circumſtances that diſtinguiſhed them. Immerſed in the errors of polytheiſm as was the great body of the Egyptian nation, it has yet been inconteſtably proved,* by the immortal Cudworth, that the hierophant, or arch-prieſt, in the ſecret rites of their religion, taught the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead; but this noble ſentiment, though they had the *magnanimity* to conceive, they wanted the *generoſity* to impart to the deluded populace; for, it was thought dangerous, both to the church and the ſtate, to ſhake the foundations of the reigning ſuperſtition. But, to thoſe ſpeculative and philoſophic minds, that poſſeſſed ſufficient firmneſs to bear the communication of ſo lofty and important a truth, the whole ſcene of vulgar deluſion was laid bare, and the myſtic veil, that obſcured the "great firſt Cauſe" from the view of his creatures, was rent aſunder; while the *initiated* were taught, that Jupiter, Vulcan, Mercury, and the reſt of the deities, who were the object of popular devotion, were nothing more than departed human beings, deified by grateful poſterity for the virtues they had practiſed

* See Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem, chap. v. ſect. 18.

tised during life and the benefits they had conferred upon mankind.

Mr. Hastings, one of the most early and liberal patrons of Sanscreet literature in India, in a letter to Nathaniel Smith, Esq. one of its most zealous encouragers in England, has remarked how accurately many of the leading principles of the pure unadulterated doctrines of Brahma correspond with those of the Christian system.* In the Geeta, indeed, some passages, surprisingly consonant, occur, concerning the sublime nature and attributes of God as well as concerning the properties and functions of the soul. Thus, where the Deity, in the form of Creeshna, addresses Arjun: "I am the Creator of all things, and all things proceed from me." "I am the beginning, the middle, and the end, of all things; I am time; I am all-grasping death, and I am the resurrection, I am the mystic figure OM! I am generation and dissolution!" Arjun, in pious extasy, exclaims: "Reverence! reverence! be unto thee a thousand times repeated! Again and again reverence! O thou,

* See Mr. Hastings's recommendatory letter to N. Smith, Esq. at that time chairman of the East-India Company, and prefixed to the GEETA.

thou, who art all in all! infinite in thy power and thy glory! Thou art the Father of all things animate and inanimate! there is none like unto thee!" p. 95. And again, where Creeshna describes the nature of the soul:— "The soul is not a thing of which a man may say it hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter; for, it is a thing without birth, it is incorruptible, eternal, inexhaustible! the weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away, for, it is indivisible, inconsumable, unalterable!" P. 37. Sir William Jones has been at the pains of translating four stanzas of the BHAGAVAT, which, he says, are scrupulously literal, and which I shall take the liberty of transcribing, since they afford not only a striking proof of the sublime notions which the Hindoos entertain concerning the Deity, but exhibit a curious specimen of the style in which their sacred books are written. The words, he observes, are believed by the Hindoos to have been pronounced to Brahma by the Supreme Being himself.

"Even I was even at the first, not any other thing; that which exists unperceived, supreme afterwards; I AM THAT WHICH IS, and he who must remain am I.

Except

Except the FIRST CAUSE, whatever may appear or may not appear in the mind, know that to be the mind's MAYA, (or *delusion*,) as light, as darkneſs.

As the great elements are in various beings, entering yet not entering; (that is, pervading, not deſtroying,) thus am I in them, yet not in them.

Even thus far may inquiry be made by him, who ſeeks to know the principle of mind, in union and ſeparation, which muſt be EVERY WHERE ALWAYS."

Wild and obſcure, Sir William obſerves, as theſe ancient verſes muſt appear in a naked verbal tranſlation, it will be thought, by many, that the poetry of Greece and Italy affords no conceptions more awfully magnificent.* The firſt ſtanza brings irreſiſtably to our recollection that ſublime verſe of the Apocalypſe; "I am ALPHA and OMEGA; the Beginning and the Ending, ſaith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY." I earneſtly intreat the candid reader, to take notice, that when, in various parts of this treatiſe, I have ſpoken of the pure and ſublime

* Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 246.

lime theology of Brahma, I have conſtantly alluded to theſe and ſimilar original paſſages in their moſt ſacred books, and not to thoſe wild ſchemes of theology, engrafted upon it by commenting Brahmins, nor the complex and degrading ſyſtem of devotion at preſent prevailing in Hindoſtan. Aſtoniſhed at the ſtriking ſimilarity that ſubſiſts between the religious principles of the Hindoos and thoſe of the Chriſtian faith, the learned Hyde * boldly pronounced, that BRAHMA muſt have been the patriarch ABRAHAM. Poſtellus,† however, had long before aſſerted the ſame thing, with this additional circumſtance, that the tribe of Brahmans were the deſcendants of that patriarch by his wife Keturah, and were ſo called, *quaſi Abrahmanes*. He might, by parity of reaſoning, have derived the name of the ſecond great Indian, or Kattri, tribe from Keturah, from which it is not very diſſimilar, but, in this caſe, unfortunately the ſame argument would hold good as that before urged againſt the probability that Zoroaſter was of Judaic extraction: the total ſilence of the Vedas in regard to circumciſion. The Arabs, who are deſcended

* Hyde, Hiſt Relig. vet. Perſ. p. 31.

† Abraham Poſtellus in Commentario ad Jezirah.

descended from Abraham by Ishmael, and are likewise jealous of the invaded honours of the great patriarch their progenitor, contend that Brahma and Abraham are the same, and Herbelot * informs us, that a Brahman, named Behergir, converted to Mahommedism, communicated to those Arabs the book called L'Ambertkend, which he calls, Livre qui contient tous les Dogmes de la Religion des Indiens, but of which book I have not been able to gain any tidings, and the description seems alone applicable to the Vedas. A very interesting, and, if true, a very important, piece of historical information, is related in the "Account of the East-Indies," by Mr. Hamilton, since it appears to account for a very large portion of those ten dispersed tribes, whose place of residence, ever since the period of their captivity, has so long been the object of curious investigation among the learned. A colony of Jews, to the amount of no less than eighty thousand families, is asserted by that author, on

* See Herbelot Biblioth. Orient. under the article *Behergir*, in which a mistake of this great orientalist should be corrected, since he calls him, Un brahman de la secte, ou de l'ordre, de ceux que l'on appelle Gioghis (Yogees.) Now the Yogees are not Brahmans, but candidates for that order. My edition of Herbelot is that of Maestricht, 1776.

on the authority of the Dutch records at Cranganore, on the coaſt of Malabar, to have anciently flouriſhed, in the kingdom of Cochin, under elders and judges of their own election. Their traditional hiſtory, which they anxiouſly preſerve on copper plates, deeply engraved in Hebrew characters, depoſited in the ſanctuary of the ſynagogue, relates, that their anceſtors came thither before the downfal of the Babylonian empire; and that hiſtory deſcends in a regular ſeries of events, from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the preſent time. It announces them to be of the tribe of Manaſſes, and deſcribes their tedious journey of three years from Babylon to the coaſt of Malabar, the various ſufferings which this miſerable and exiled race, amounting to twenty thouſand families, endured in their progreſs thither, the hoſpitable reception they met with from the natives, their thriving commerce, their increaſing population, the period of their higheſt power and aggrandization, and that of their gradual decline, down to their preſent number, of about four thouſand families only. A ſimilar colony, if we may believe the Jeſuits, eſtabliſhed themſelves in China.

Although

Although I thought it incumbent upon me to mention these circumstances, yet I am cautious of urging any argument that may seem to arise from this evidence of the ancient intercourse which the Indians enjoyed with the chosen people of God; for, polytheism has ever flourished with more vigour in the peninsula than on the continent of India. From this source, then, I dare not assert, that the Hindoos derived their purer theological tenets, since those tenets appear to me to be of superior antiquity. It is only from NOAH himself, the great inspired prophet of the antediluvian race of mortals, and the august father of the present, or else from one or other of the sons of the righteous SHEM, who might make this happy region their early abode, that this unfathomable antiquity of the Brahman scriptures allows me to derive the grand *principia* of their *almost Christian* theology, that august fabric, of which we observe the UNITY OF GOD forms the central pillar. This sublime doctrine OF AN INVISIBLE, ETERNAL, AND SELF-EXISTENT, GOD, WHOM ALL SYMBOLICAL REPRESENTATION MUST DEGRADE, has ever been upheld by those among them who have dared to divulge a dogma kept profoundly secret from the vulgar, whose sensual conceptions, they imagined, were only to

be

be actuated upon, and whose stubborn minds were only to be kept in sacred subjection to an arbitrary priesthood by external objects, and who, consequently, were permitted to plunge by degrees into the lowest abyss of gross and multifarious idolatry. They were first suffered to adore the attributes of God under representative figures, decorated with emblematical ornaments, they were next allowed to pay divine honours to rajahs, in whom the deity had condescended to become incarnate, and who were, therefore, supposed to be invested with a portion of his divinity; for, the doctrine of the AVATARS, or heavenly descents, undoubtedly contributed to keep alive, if it did not originally give birth to, the belief of the Metempsychosis, as well as to cherish the errors of idol-worship in India. The symbol in time came to be adored instead of the Original, the rajah was honoured in the place of his Creator. The more artful and luxurious Brahmin, who, under the garb of austerity and sanctity, fattened upon the spoils of superstition, beheld and exulted in the success of his project; he crouded the sculptured wall of the sacred cavern with symbolical figures and statues of deified rajahs; he bade

bade the people approach them with holy reverence, and he excited their wonder and respect by recounting to them the heroic feats they had performed during the period of their sojourning with mortals. But this alone was not sufficient; terror has a more lasting influence than admiration upon the human mind. With the symbolic figures of the mercy and goodness of God were blended those of his justice and his wrath. As the former were sculptured with smiling aspects, and were decorated with the ensigns of peace and protection, so were the latter portrayed with horrible distorted visages, and arrayed with every dreadful symbol that could alarm and terrify the beholder. These figures, converted into dæmons, under the notion of being the avenging ministers of omnipotent justice, were most to the purpose of the priest. He recited their number, he magnified their enormous power, and he awakened the agonizing terrors of his audience by impressing them with ideas of their constant and immediate interference in human affairs. To the gazing and infatuated multitude, who thronged the porches and the body of the august temple, he exclaimed; BEHOLD YOUR GODS! and the imagination was

acted upon in the ſame manner as at this moment, in the modern pagodas, by deſcriptive paintings, by expreſſive ſymbols, and myſterious ceremonies and exhibitions. But, in every ſucceſſive age of the Indian empire, from its foundation to the preſent time, there have not been wanting Brahmins who ſpurned at the intereſted practices of their brethren, and who oppoſed, as far as they dared, the prevailing torrent of idolatry that ſo widely overſpread the land. Among theſe, the great VEIAS, the Plato of India, holds the moſt diſtinguiſhed rank; for, his deſign in writing the Geeta, as Mr. Wilkins has told us in his elegant preface, ſeems to have been, "to undermine certain tenets inculcated in the Vedas, by ſetting up the doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead, in oppoſition to idolatrous ſacrifices and the worſhip of images; for, although the author dared not make a direct attack, either upon the prevailing prejudices of the people or the divine authority of thoſe ancient ſcriptures, yet, by offering *eternal* happineſs to ſuch as worſhip BRAHME, the Almighty, whilſt he declares the reward of ſuch as follow other gods ſhould be but a temporary reward in an inferior heaven, for a period meaſured by the extent of their virtues, his intention, doubtleſs,

doubtless, was to bring about the downfal of polytheism.*

Similar to this conduct was that of the hierophant in the mystic cells of Egypt. The immortal Cudworth† has indeed ably vindicated the Egyptian priests from the charge of atheism; but still the people were kept in profound ignorance of that great truth, the UNITY OF GOD, which it was thought dangerous to reveal, lest a contempt of the established system and the downfal of the popular superstition should be the fatal consequence. They permitted therefore the multitude to remain plunged as they were in the depth of a gross and complicated idolatry; but, for those philosophic few who could bear the light of truth without being confounded by the blaze, they removed the mysterious veil, and displayed to them the Deity in the radiant glory of his UNITY. From the vulgar eye, however, these doctrines were kept inviolably sacred, and wrapt in the veil of impenetrable mystery. They were denominated MYSTERIES, as well because the initiated were enjoined to keep the doctrines inculcated, and the rites

 practised,

* Preface to the Geeta, p. 24.

† See Cudworth's Intellectual System, chap. iv. p. 4. sect. 18.

practiſed, in the ſecret cell, ſacred from the profane, as becauſe the former were conſtantly taught, and the latter celebrated εν σκοτω και νυκτι, in the boſom of darkneſs and in the dead ſilence of the night. This profound darkneſs, this midnight ſilence, they imagined, threw a kind of ſacred horror over their rites, *and the prieſts, both of Egypt and Athens,* thought theſe a ſecurer defence againſt intruſion than either the ſecret depths of thoſe ſubterraneous caverns in which they were originally celebrated, or the lofty walls that, in ſucceeding ages, encircled the ſuperb temple of Ceres at Eleuſis. In the extenſive review which Warburton has taken of this ſubject, after mentioning the diviſion of the Eleuſinian myſteries into the GREATER and the LESS, after ſtating that in the LESS was inculcated the general belief of a providence and of a future ſtate, and that they were only preparatory to the GREATER, that celebrated inveſtigator of thoſe myſteries thus proceeds: " But there was one inſuperable obſtacle in paganiſm to a life of purity and holineſs, which was the vicious examples of their gods. Ego homuncio, hoc non facerem? was the abſolving formulary, whenever a man had determined to give

give a loose to his irregular appetites. There was a necessity therefore of remedying this evil, which could only be done by striking at the root of it, so that, such of the initiated as were judged capable were made acquainted with the whole delusion. The mystagogue taught them, that Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Mars, and the whole rabble of licentious deities, were indeed only DEAD MORTALS, subject in life to the same passions and vices with themselves, but, having been, in several instances, benefactors to mankind, grateful posterity had deified them; and, with their virtues, had indiscreetly canonized their vices. The fabulous gods being thus routed, the SUPREME CAUSE of all things, of course, took their place; him they were taught to consider as the Creator of the universe, who pervaded all things by his virtue, and governed all things by his providence. From this time, the initiated had the title of Ἐπόπτης, or, *one that sees things as they are, without disguise*, whereas before he was called Μύστης, which has a contrary signification."* The reader will recollect, that there has been described, in the cavern of Elephanta,

* Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 148.

phanta, an interior recess, or sacellum, which, while the exterior temple was crowded with mythologic sculptures, possessed no ornament whatsoever, except one solitary but degrading emblem of the great Creator. However degrading the symbol, it was certainly intended to shadow out the ONE SUPREME DEITY and FATHER OF ALL. The exterior temple was, therefore, allotted for the performance of the blind and prostrate devotions of the multitude, and, at the same time, it must be owned, that many of the divinities, whose images are graven on those walls, were as remarkable for licentiousness, in the mythologic histories of the Hindoos, as ever were those of the Egyptians and Greeks in their fabulous annals. The external temple was also appropriated, like the body of the mystic temples of Egypt, to the initiation of the younger brahmins into the lesser mysteries of the Hindoo religion and sciences, as well as to the celebration of the splendid rites of the former and the display of the wonderful arcana of the latter. The elder and more experienced votaries, the *Indian Epoptai*, were admitted into the internal sanctuary, and all the errors of vulgar polytheism, as in the greater mysteries of Egypt and Eleusis,

ſis, were laid bare to their view. The DEITY broke forth in all the majeſty of UNITY upon them, and the riſing SUN of TRUTH diſſipated the clouds of deception and allegory.

However defective and inconcluſive may be thought the arguments brought by Warburton in ſupport of the general hypotheſis, which he laboured to eſtabliſh in the Divine Legation, and however particularly erroneous and fanciful may appear his ſtrictures upon the ſixth Æneid of Virgil,* in elucidation of the Eleuſinian myſteries, yet, it muſt be owned, that he has diſplayed in that work a profundity of learning, and a ſplendour of genius, that ſcarcely ever before concentrated their rays to illumine one publication Proud to follow ſo exalted a guide, upon ground not altogether treacherous, I ſhall now proceed to ſtate ſome farther particulars, which he has enumerated in relation to the preſent ſubject, and examine how far they may be compatible with the religious rites and ſciences of India. In the firſt place, in confirmation of what has been juſt now advanced, may be urged a paſſage, quoted by the biſhop from Clemens, that, with the principles of theology taught in the

 myſteries,

* See a much more judicious account of that Æneid by Dr. Beattie in the Philoſoph. Tranſact. Edinburgh, vol. ii. part ii. p. 33.

mysteries, were actually blended those that relate to natural history and philosophy; since that author expressly says, that the doctrines, delivered in the greater mysteries treated concerning the universe, adding, "here ends all instruction, things are seen as they are; and nature, and the things of nature, are given to be comprehended." The various mathematical symbols, and other philosophical apparatus, that ornamented the mithratic caves of the Brahmans, added to what we have already stated concerning their extensive astronomical investigations, and the doctrines *relative* to the mundane system, which Ammianus Marcellinus affirms they imparted to the Persian legislator, will be considered, I presume, as one strong proof of this assertion. But a still more decisive proof seems to arise from another passage, cited from Themistius, which describes the entrance of the initiated "into a region all over illuminated, and shining with a divine splendour," where the Αυτοπτου Αγαλμα, or self-conspicuous image, the mystic emblem of the great vivifying principle of nature, diffused around an inconceivable splendour. In the second place, and what is more remarkably to our present purpose, may be adduced the

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attestation inserted from Proclus; that, in the celebration of the mysteries, the initiated met many things of multiform shapes and species, that prefigured the first GENERATION of the gods. The principal symbol alluded to in this place will be obvious to the reader, since *by the gods* are unquestionably meant the first race of deified mortals. The Sun, however, and elementary Fire, are emblems of the Deity, so frequently mentioned in ancient Sanscreet writings, and withal emblems so much more noble than that in question, that I cannot avoid retaining my *first* opinion on the subject, that they were the most early symbols of Deity exhibited in these recesses, and that the one intimated is only a base substitution, derived from the degenerate devotion established in Egypt by Ham. Indeed the passage cited before seems incontestably to prove this point. To this may be added another, quoted from the scholiast, in the Oracles of Zoroaster, in which it is declared, that he who is fully initiated, beholds τα θεια φωτα, or the DIVINE LIGHTS. And surely THE REFULGENT ORB OF DAY, surely that FIRE, which the Hermetic philosophers, in their enthusiastic strain, denominate *the radiant child of the sun*, are far more

more expressive, as they doubtless are more decent, emblems of the great generative and invigorating faculty of nature than that wretched device of a depraved mind. We have, however, seen its origin and its intention in the rites of Isis; and, if Tertullian may be credited, the very same indecent emblem was adored at Eleusis, and excited both the pointed ridicule and vehement reproaches of the fathers of the church. In fact, there can be but little doubt, and therefore it ought candidly to be allowed, that, originally, the Pagan world, under the masculine symbol, worshipped, or pretended to worship, as the Hindoos at this day avow, the first creative energy, and, under the feminine symbol, (for, both symbols were adored in that prostituted system of religion,) was typified Ceres, the Earth, the Dea Multimamma, the prolific parent of all things. Those, however, who thus emblematically represented the all-bounteous mother, the goddess of fertility, the bestower of fruits and grain, ought to have learned better, from a particular circumstance in the fabulous history of Ceres, for, when, in gratitude to the father of Triptolemus, she undertook the education of that youth,

youth, to haſten his maturity ſhe fed him in the day-time with divine milk, and by night ſhe covered him all over with GENIAL FIRE. But a little reflection will ſoon convince us, that, as perſons of either ſex were promiſcuouſly allowed to be initiated, when the original phyſical cauſe by degrees came to be forgotten, what a general diſſipation, what a boundleſs immorality, would be promoted by ſo ſcandalous an exhibition! The ſeaſon of nocturnal gloom, in which thoſe myſteries were performed, and the inviolable ſecreſy which accompanied the celebration of them, added to the inviting ſolitude of the ſcene, conſpired at once to break down all the barriers of modeſty, to overturn all the fortitude of manly virtue, and to rend the veil of modeſty from the bluſhing face of virgin innocence. At length, licentious paſſion trampled upon the moſt ſacred obſtacles which law and religion united to raiſe againſt it. The Bacchanal, frantic with midnight intemperance, polluted the ſecret ſanctuary, and Proſtitution ſate THRONED upon the very altars of the gods. It is not my intention to ſtain theſe pages with a repetition of the enormous and aggravated impieties committed during the celebration of the myſ-

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teries of Bacchus at Rome, and ſo circumſtantially recorded by the hiſtorian Livy,* nor the multi-form impurities ſuppoſed to have been perpetrated in thoſe of the BONA DEA; but, the obſcene abominations connived at in India, and even promoted by the more corrupt Brahmins, (I mean with reſpect to that ill-fated and proſtituted race, denominated the WOMEN OF THE IDOL,) are too cloſely connected with the preſent unpleaſing ſubject to be paſſed over in total ſilence. What I ſhall offer, on this curious ſubject, will be taken from two authentic books, written at very different periods, and therefore fully deciſive, as to the general prevalence of the inſtitution from age to age; the Anciennes Rélations, and Les Voyages de M. Tavernier: the former written in the 9th, the latter in the 17th, century.

Incited unqueſtionably by the hieroglyphic emblem of vice, ſo conſpicuouſly elevated and ſo ſtrikingly painted in the temples of MAHADEO, the prieſts of that deity induſtriouſly ſelected the moſt beautiful females that could be found, and, in their tendereſt years, with great pomp and ſolemnity, conſecrated them (as it is impiouſly called) to the

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* See Livii Hiſt. lib. 39.

ſervice of the preſiding divinity of the pagoda. They were trained up in every art to delude and to delight; and, to the faſcination of external beauty, their artful betrayers added the attractions ariſing from mental accompliſhments. Thus was an invariable rule of the Hindoos, *that women have no concern with literature*, diſpenſed with upon this infamous occaſion. The moment theſe hapleſs victims reached maturity, they fell victims to the luſt of the Brahmins. They were early taught to practiſe the moſt alluring blandiſhments, to roll the expreſſive eye of wanton pleaſure, and to invite to criminal indulgence by ſtealing upon the beholder the tender look of voluptuous languiſhing. They were inſtructed to mould their elegant and airy forms into the moſt enticing attitudes and the moſt laſcivious geſtures, while the rapid and graceful motion of their feet, adorned with golden bells and glittering with jewels, kept uniſon with the exquiſite melody of their voices. Every pagoda has a band of theſe young ſyrens, whoſe buſineſs, on great feſtivals, is to dance in public before the idol, to ſing hymns in his honour, and in private to enrich the treaſury of that pagoda with the wages of proſtitution.

prostitution. These women are not, however, regarded in a dishonourable light; they are considered as *wedded to the idol*, and they partake of the veneration paid to him. They are forbidden ever to desert the pagoda where they are educated, and are never permitted to marry; but the offspring, if any, of their criminal embraces, are considered as sacred to the idol: the boys are taught to play on the sacred instruments used at the festivals, and the daughters are devoted to the abandoned occupations of their mothers. The reader has, doubtless, heard and read frequently of the degeneracy and venality of PRIESTS, and we know, from Herodotus, what scandalous prostitutions were anciently *suffered** in honour of Mylitta, but, a system of corruption, so systematical, so deliberate, and so nefarious, and that professedly carried on in the name and for the advantage of religion, stands perhaps unrivalled in the history of the world and the annals of infamy. It was by degrees that the Eleusinian worship arrived

* I say *suffered*, because it does not appear that the prostitutes, in the temple of this Assyrian Venus, were trained by the priests to ruin; the whole account, however, is in other respects too similar. I do not choose to insert the scandalous particulars, but the reader may find them in Herodotus, lib. 1. p. 62.

arrived at the point of enormity above recited, and the obſcenities, finally prevalent, were equally regretted and diſclaimed by the inſtitutors, but, in India, we ſee an avowed plan of ſhameleſs ſeduction and debauchery; the prieſt himſelf converted into a baſe procurer, and the pagoda into a public brothel. The devout Mahomedan traveller, whoſe journey to India, in the ninth century, has been publiſhed by M. Renaudot, and from which account this deſcription is partly taken, concludes the article by a ſolemn thankſgiving to the Almighty, that *he* and *his* nation were delivered from the errors of infidelity, and were unſtained by the horrible enormities of ſo criminal a devotion!*

Nothing can be conceived more ſolemn than the rites of initiation into the greater myſteries, as deſcribed by Apuleius and Dion Chryſoſtome, who had both gone through the awful ceremony: nothing more tremendous and appalling than the ſcenery exhibited before the eyes of the terrified *aſpirant*. After entering the grand veſtibule of the myſtic ſhrine, he was led by the hierophant, amidſt ſurrounding

* See Anciennes Relations, p. 88, and Voyage de Tavernier, livre i. chap. v. beginning at 'Cette Pagode eſt remplie de quantité de nudités,' &c.

rounding darkneſs and incumbent horrors, through all thoſe extended ailes, winding avenues, and gloomy adyta, mentioned above as equally belonging to the myſtic temples of Egypt, Eleuſis, and India. I have aſſerted before, that the Metempſychoſis was one of the leading *principia* taught in thoſe temples, and this firſt ſtage was intended to repreſent the toilſome wanderings of the benighted ſoul through the mazes of vice and error before initiation; or, in the words of an ancient writer quoted by Warburton from Stobæus: "It was a rude and fearful march through night and darkneſs."* Preſently the ground began to rock beneath his feet, the whole temple trembled, and ſtrange and dreadful voices were heard through the midnight ſilence. To theſe ſucceeded other louder and more terrific noiſes, reſembling thunder; while quick and vivid flaſhes of lightning darted through the cavern, diſplaying to his view many ghaſtly ſights and hideous ſpectres, emblematical of the various vices, diſeaſes, infirmities, and calamities, incident in that ſtate of terreſtrial bondage from which his ſtruggling ſoul was now going to emerge, as well as of the horrors and penal

* See Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 235.

penal torments of the guilty in a future ſtate. At this period, all the pageants of vulgar idolatry, all the train of gods, ſupernal and infernal, paſſed in awful ſucceſſion before him, and a hymn, called *the Theology of Idols*, recounting the genealogy and functions of each, was ſung: afterwards, the whole fabulous detail was ſolemnly recanted by the myſtagogue; a divine hymn in honour of ETERNAL AND IMMUTABLE TRUTH was chanted, and the profounder myſteries commenced. " And now, arrived on the verge of *death* and *initiation*, every thing wears a dreadful aſpect; it is all horror, trembling, and aſtoniſhment." An icy chillineſs ſeizes his limbs; a copious dew, like the damp of real death, bathes his temples, he ſtaggers, and his faculties begin to fail; when the ſcene is of a ſudden changed, and the doors of the interior and ſplendidly-illumined temple are thrown wide open. A " miraculous and divine light diſcloſes itſelf: and ſhining plains and flowery meadows open on all hands before him." Acceſſi confinium mortis, ſays Apuleius,* et calcato Proſerpinæ limine,

* Apuleii Metamorphoſis, lib. ii. v. i. p. 273 Edit. noviſſima, ad optimas editiones collata, ſtudiis Societatis Bipontinæ, 1788.

mine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi; nocte medio vidi SOLEM candido coruscantem lumine:—Arrived at the bourn of mortality, after having trod the gloomy threshold of Proserpine, I passed rapidly through all the surrounding elements; and, at deep midnight, beheld the sun shining in meridian splendour. The clouds of mental error and the shades of real darkness being now alike dissipated, both the soul and body of the initiated experienced a delightful vicissitude; and, while the latter, purified with lustrations, bounded in a blaze of glory, the former dissolved in a tide of overwhelming transport. Those few authors of the ancient world, who have written on this subject, and who have dared to unfold to posterity the awful and deep secrets into which they were initiated, speak of them exactly as the Brahmins do of the divine raptures of *absorption* in the Deity, or the modern sect of Swedenborgh of those of their imagined Elysium. At that period of virtuous and triumphant exultation, according to the divine Plato, (the VYASA of Greece,) " they saw celestial beauty in all the dazzling radiance of its perfection, when, joining with the glorified chorus, they were admitted to the

μακαρίαν

μακαρίαν ὄψιν, or *beatific viſion*, and were initiated into the moſt bleſſed of all myſteries."*

I ſhall conclude this prolonged account of the ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES with mentioning a few particulars, which, added to what has been already ſaid, will, I conceive, leave little doubt remaining in the mind of the reader concerning the real and original country in which they were firſt inſtituted; unleſs indeed he ſhould be inclined to believe ſo improbable a circumſtance as that the haughty and ſelf-ſufficient Brahmin might have borrowed, from the remote region of Greece, the moſt ſacred and indiſpenſable rituals of his religion. Of thoſe various, tedious, and complex, ceremonies, as well as of the exact and ſevere diſcipline which the Brahmin is compelled to toil through in the ſeveral ſtages of the CHAR ASHERUM, or *four Hindoo degrees*, I ſhall treat amply in the ſucceeding chapter; but it will be peculiarly illuſtrative of the preſent ſubject, to deſcribe, in this place, the ablutions neceſſary to be performed by the BERHEMCHAREE, or Brahmin of the firſt degree. They are thus, verbatim et literatim, related in the

* Καλλος δε τοτε ην ιδειν λαμπρον, &c. Platonis Phæd. p. 1224. Ficini edit. Francfort. 1602.

the Ayeen Akbery.* "The Brahmin bathes every morning before sun-rise. He begins his ablution with taking up in his right hand a little water, and says, Pardon my offences! After this he throws away the water; then he rubs himself all over with earth; and, if he be in a river, dives three times, or else he throws water thrice over his body, and rubs himself with his hands. Next he repeats the name of GOD, and afterwards thrice takes up in his right hand a little water, which he sips, and repeats certain prayers, during all which time he sprinkles water upon his head. Then, with his fore-finger and thumb, he stops his nostrils, and, bowing down his face to the surface of the water, repeats another prayer, and then plunges again, or throws water over himself thrice. He then sprinkles *seven* times his forehead, breast, and shoulders: after this, joining his open hands, he fills them *eight* times with water, and throws it towards the sun, reciting a particular prayer. He then sips the water, and finally repeats the PARAYT-NAM." This, adds Abul Fazil, they call the ablution; and a very ample ablution, the reader will, doubtless, esteem it. Let us now in-

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* Ayeen Akbery, vol iii. p. 217.

quire what was the introductory rite of initiation practised at Eleusis. The very first and most important ceremony in the lesser mysteries was the purification of the body BY WATER, intended to inculcate the necessity of a similar purification of the soul from the impure adhesions of vicious passions and propensities; and, it is remarkable, that the officer assisting upon that solemn occasion was called Ὑδρανος, from *υδωρ, water*. The same ceremony of ablution was repeated on the initiation into the greater mysteries; for, according to Meursius, whose account I do not possess, but whom archbishop Potter,* in his extended account of this festival, has sedulously followed, at the very entrance of the grand mystic temple the aspirant washed his hands in consecrated water: and Apuleius, who had been initiated, expressly says,† *Septies* submerso fluctibus capite, quod eum numerum principivè religione aptissimum divinus ille Pythagoras prodidit. The very mention of Pythagoras, who is recorded in the Hindoo annals ‡ to have visited India, by

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* See Potter's Grecian Antiq. vol. ii. p. 390. Edit. Oct.

† Apuleii Metamorph. vol. i. p 254 Edit. Bipont. 1788.

‡ Mr. Holwell acquaints us, I presume from good authority, that both the Persian legislator and the Grecian philosopher made

this author, and his ſpecifying the particular number *ſeven*, are two of the ſtrongeſt teſtimonies that can be adduced in proof of the truth of the preceding remark.

The reader will not, perhaps, be diſpleaſed to pauſe with me for one moment; and, while he conſiders the number and variety of theſe ablutions, but eſpecially the endleſs repetition of thoſe of the Brahmin, he will aſk, for what important cauſe was this tedious round of ablutions preſcribed him? He will demand, in memorial of WHAT GRAND EVENT were theſe eternal bathings in rivers and tanks ordained? If it ſhould be anſwered, they were intended as a memento of internal purity, and an incitement to preſerve unſpotted virtue amidſt abounding vice; or, if they ſhould be affirmed to have ſprung from a laudable intention in the great legiſlator to promote external health and vigour of conſtitution in a dangerous and enervating climate; he will probably allow, in the inſtitution, much ſolid wiſdom and piety; and, in the practice, much ſubſtanſtial benefit. But I will venture to affirm, that, independently

made a long reſidence with the Brahmins, north-weſt of the Ganges, and that the names of Zardhurſt and Pythagore are ſtill remembered "as travellers in ſearch of wiſdom."

pendently of thoſe momentous conſiderations, two other events, the moſt intereſting and the moſt important in the annals of mankind, are meant to be ſhadowed out, and the memory of them, by theſe rites, indelibly impreſſed and kept alive in the breaſt of the devotee: I mean, the CREATION of the WORLD, when Brahma or the ſpirit of God floated, in his lotos bed, upon the waters of the Chaos, and the deſtruction of that world by a GENERAL DELUGE. This latter aſſertion, will, undoubtedly, provoke a ſarcaſtic ſmile, at my ignorance, from thoſe who have read in the preface to the code of Hindoo laws, that the Brahmins deny that "the deluge ever took place in Hindoſtan;" an aſſertion, which, with ſome other authors, Mr. Halhed, in a future edition, will probably cancel from his otherwiſe valuable and authentic page. Having, however, made this ſubject, as well as the not leſs involved one of their wild chronology, objects of particular, and of laborious inveſtigation, I have the happineſs to acquaint the reader, that a conſiderable part of my enſuing volume is devoted to the elucidation of thoſe points. I may take the liberty to add, without indulging an improper vanity, that, though it be far

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from wanting that additional support, the grand fabric of the Mosaic theology, so far from being shaken to its foundations by those Indian chimæras, that have so widely gone forth into the world and have been propagated with such indecent zeal by some writers of a sceptical class, will, in the result of the investigation, obtain a new column of adamant to uphold and adorn it. In fact, every fresh attack upon that majestic fabric tends only the more to prove its IMPREGNABLE SOLIDITY, and cover its enemies with FRESH CONFUSION. Upon the present subject, I ought not to omit doing justice to one of the greatest scholars and the most ingenious men of the present age, who has suggested the NOVEL, the PIOUS, and the FORCIBLE, remark, that the real foundation of all the mysteries celebrated in every country, from the period of their supposed commencement in Egypt to that of their final extinction at Rome in the prefecture of Gracchus, was a pious and grateful attempt of the first post-diluvian ages to commemorate the miraculous escape, under Divine Providence, of their immediate ancestors from the jaws of a watery grave, and their preservation in the ark, fabricated by the direction

rection of God. I shall take the liberty of transcribing a passage or two, from the second volume of the Analysis of Ancient Mythology, in illustration of the author's hypothesis. After asserting, that all the mysterious rites of the Gentile world appear to have been memorials of the deluge and of the events which immediately succeeded, Mr. Bryant adds—"Those mysteries, for the most part, consisted of a melancholy process; and were celebrated, by night, with torches, in commemoration of the state of darkness in which the great patriarch and his family had been involved."* In another place he takes notice, that "there was scarcely any circumstance, however minute, mentioned by Moses concerning the ARK and NOAH, but what was recorded in the family of Ham. It is said of the patriarch, that he was a man of the earth, and skilled in planting and sowing, and every species of agriculture. When he constructed the ark, he made a window in it; through which, after a season, he looked forth, and saw the ruins of the former world. He made also a DOOR in the ark; which was a circumstance continually commemorated by the Gentile writers. The entrance, through it, they esteemed a passage to death and darkness;

* See Bryant's Analysis, vol. ii. p. 331, 332, 333.

ness; but the egress from it was represented as a return to life. And, as the residence in the ark was an intermediate state between a lost world and a world renewed, this was constantly alluded to in their symbolical representations."* The reader will observe that the ingenious analyst, throughout his instructive work, supposes Noah to be the genuine Osiris. He informs us, that, as the principal rites in Egypt were confessedly for a person lost, and consigned for a time to darkness, but who, after much bewailing and anxious search, was at length found, and supposed to be restored to life, no allusion could possibly point more directly than this to the previous disappearance of the patriarch, to the perils and gloom with which he might well be supposed to be surrounded in the ark, and his consequent emerging and final restoration to light and safety. He observes, that the emphatical expression of the μυςτης, when purified, "I have escaped a sad calamity, and my lot is greatly mended;" and, at the feast of Isis, the exulting exclamation, Ευρηχαμεν, Συγχαιρομεν! *we have found the lost* OSIRIS, *let us rejoice together!* have also a decided reference to the same event, that, among

* Bryant's Analysis, vol. ii. p. 257.

among many other circumſtances corroborative of his poſition, not the leaſt convincing is the very ceremony adopted, during the efforts of the prieſts to find the miſſing object of their reſearch, that of a number of their body going down by night to the ſea-ſhore, bearing a ſacred ſcyphus, in which was a golden veſſel in the *form* of a *ſhip* or *boat*, and into which they poured ſome of the water of the river; that this being performed, the ſhout of tumultuous joy above-mentioned broke forth from the croud, and that then Oſiris was ſuppoſed to be found.* He winds up the whole of his argument, by proving, from Plutarch, that this ceremony of incloſing Oſiris in his tomb, or ark, in memory of his having been in his life-time thus concealed to avoid the fury of Typhon, their known ſymbol of the ocean, took place preciſely upon the ſeventeenth day of the ſecond month, after the autumnal equinox; that is, in fact, upon the very day on which the TRUE OSIRIS entered the ark, which, in Scripture, is ſaid to have taken place in the ſix hundredth year of Noah's life, ON THE SECOND MONTH, AND ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THAT MONTH.

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* Bryant's Analyſis, vol. ii. p. 333, 334, 335.

The Eleusinian aspirant, after ablution, was clothed in a linen vestment, the emblem of purity, and, we are informed,* in the Indian register before-mentioned, that the Brahmin candidate, in the first stage of probation, was arrayed "in a linen garment without suture." But the mystic temple itself, as described by Apuleius,† was ædes amplissima; according to Vitruvius, it was immani magnitudine; and, according to Strabo, it was capable of holding as large a number as a theatre.‡ If these several authors had intended to describe the pagodas of Salsette and of Elephanta, could they have done it with more characteristic accuracy? temples, of which the former, according to M. Niebuhr, is a square of 120 feet, and in the latter of which, if we are rightly informed in the seventh volume of the Archæologia, the grand altar alone is elevated to the astonishing height of twenty-seven feet. The gloomy avenues surrounding them have been also particularised; in which an overwhelming dread and horror seized the benighted wanderer; and, with respect to the gaudy

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii p. 217.
† Apuleii Metamorph. vol. i lib. ii. p. 271.
‡ Strabonis Geograph. lib. ix. p. 380, edit. Basil.

gaudy ſhows and ſplendid ſcenery occaſionally diſplayed to the view of the initiated in their receſſes; who that beholds the ſuperb decorations, the richly painted walls, and carved imagery, in the modern pagodas; who, that conſiders the beauty of the colours, and the ingenuity of the devices, conſpicuous in many of the manufactures of India, whether in gold and ſilver enamel, in boxes curiouſly inlaid with ivory, in carpets of ſilk richly flowered, and linens ſtained with variegated dies, can poſſibly entertain a doubt of the ability of the ancient Indians ſtrikingly to portray, on canvaſs or otherwiſe, the allegorical viſions, in which the genius of the nation takes ſo much delight; the amaranthine bowers, in which beatified ſpirits are ſuppoſed to reſide, and the Elyſian plains of EENDRA's voluptuous paradiſe? The initiated in the Grecian temples were crowned with myrtle, and Herodotus* informs us, that the Perſian prieſts of Mithra, and conſequently thoſe of India, were decked with a rich tiara, wound about with the ſame foliage, and that the arch-prieſt, then επαειδει θεογονιην, ſang the theogony,

* Herodoti lib. i. p. 65. Steph. edit. 1592.

theogony, or ode reciting the origin of the gods.

The Hierophant, that is, *the revealer of sacred things*, in the Eleusinian mysteries, was arrayed in the habit and adorned with the symbols of the great Creator of the world, of whom in those mysteries he was supposed to be the substitute, and revered as the emblem. He was attended in his sacred office by three assistant ministers, of whom the first was called Δαδυχος, or the torch-bearer; he was intended to represent the SUN. The second was denominated Κηρυξ, or the herald; he was considered as the type of the planet MERCURY. The third was called Ο επι Βωμω, or the minister of the altar, and he was venerated as the symbol of the MOON. It is scarcely possible to affirm, with certainty, in what resplendent vest the Greeks might think it decent or proper to array the Supreme Being, but it is not impossible to conceive, that a race of men, so deeply immersed, as were the Indians, in profound philosophical researches and in extensive speculations of a physical nature, might be led, even in spite of the purer theological tenets that forbade the degradation, in their mysterious institutions to shadow out, under the person of the high presiding Brahmin, the Supreme Creator

Creator of all things, and to decorate that ſacred Perſonage (the ſymbolical repreſentation of Deity) in a looſely-floating tunic of a bright cerulean tincture, and ſpangled with innumerable ſtars: while their great attachment to aſtronomy might induce them to conſider the prieſts, who officiated around him, as repreſenting the planetary train, moving in their ſeveral ſtations by his immediate command and influence, and clothed with brightneſs from the reflection of his own tranſcendent glory.

The nature of the myſterious rites and ſciences, anciently celebrated and taught in the caverns of ELEPHANTA and SALSETTE, has been extenſively explained. The æra of the fabrication of thoſe caverns is a point which cannot be ſettled with equal exactneſs; though it is probable that certain SANSCREET inſcriptions, diſcovered on the walls of the former, and accurately engraved, but not explained, by M. Anquetil, may contain the deſired information. An exact copy of them, we are informed, is now in the poſſeſſion of the Aſiatic Society, of which we may expect to ſee as correct a verſion in ſome future volume, and conſequently this obſcure point elucidated. The taſte for hieroglyphic ornaments,

diſplayed

displayed through those recesses in every part of India, (for those at Elora are still more numerous and surprising,) has inclined some writers to think them the workmanship of Egyptian artists, and the idea apparently derives force from a tradition prevalent in these parts, and mentioned by Niebuhr, "that there came hither a certain foreign people, who, in one night, hewed all the figures in the rock, and went away the ensuing morning." Indeed, when we reflect that the ancient Egyptians, under the name of OSIRIS,* paid adoration to the sun with fervour little inferior to that of the Persians, that in their hieroglyphics, according to the representation of Macrobius, they portrayed that divinity under the symbol of a *scepter and an eye*, the eye that surveyed and the sceptre that commanded all things; and that the whole mountainous region of Upper Egypt, bordering upon the Nile, was crouded with subterraneous grottos and caverns, abounding with astonishing hieroglyphic sculptures, so similar to those in India, that skilful examiners have thought they discovered among

* M. Savary, from Jablonski's Lexicon, gives a new derivation of the word *Osiris*, which he deduces from OSH IRI, that is, *He who makes time*. Vol. ii. Letter the 19th.

among the ruins of the Thebais, a great part of the Brahmin mythology, we are filled with equal astonishment and perplexity. On this disputable point let us first attend to Mr. Norden, a traveller whose pencil was as accurate in delineating, as his pen was correct in describing, the antiquities of Egypt. If the Hindoos, according to the assertion of Ovington, absurdly assign to a gigantic progeny, whom they thought alone adequate to the atchievement of such stupendous works, the fabrication of their caverns; so, in like manner, the Egyptians, Mr. Norden acquaints us, attribute the prodigious excavations with which the Thebais abounds, to a similar origin. "There reigns among the people who at present inhabit Egypt, a tradition, that there were anciently in the country GIANTS, who raised, without much difficulty, the pyramids, the vast palaces, and the temples (external or subterraneous) which we have been just describing *." Although the idea of their being fabricated by giants hardly deserved a serious consideration, yet this ingenious traveller has taken an opportunity, from the measure of the entrances into the caves, the dimensions of the gates of the erected temples, and those of the

* See Norden's Travels in Egypt and Nubia, vol. i. p. 111. of the 8vo edit. by Dr. Templeman, Lond. 1757.

Sarcophagus remaining to this day in the largest of the pyramids, of demonstrating what might otherwise with some shadow of reason have been doubted, that the inhabitants of Egypt, in those most remote periods, differed not in size from the present race of men. These circumstances he mentions as incontestible proofs, that the human race have not degenerated in stature: "for the Sarcophagus," he observes, "determines the size of the body of the monarch for whom the pyramid was erected; and the passages of that pyramid evince, that the workmen have not been of a larger size than the prince; since the entrance and the egress scarcely afford sufficient room for men of moderate stature, such as they have at present."

Our learned countryman, that profound geometrician and astronomer, Mr. Greaves, who had visited those pyramids previously to Mr. Norden, and obliged the public with a description of them and their contents mathematically correct, corroborates his opinion on this point. He describes the internal dimensions of the Sarcophagus as somewhat exceeding six feet in length, and not quite three feet in depth and breadth. "A narrow space," he adds, "yet large enough to contain a most potent and dreadful monarch when dead, for whom, when

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living, all Egypt was too ſtrait and narrow a circuit. By theſe dimenſions, and by ſuch other obſervations as have been made by me, from ſeveral embalmed bodies in Egypt, we may conclude that there is no decay in human nature; (though the queſtion is as old as Homer!) but that the men of this age are of the ſame ſtature of which they were three thouſand years ago, notwithſtanding St. Auguſtin and others are of a different opinion *."

The Brahmins alſo contend that the ſtature, as well as the age of man, is gradually decreaſing: ſo that, as I have had occaſion elſewhere † to remark, from Mr. Holwell, towards the cloſe of the CALLEE YUG, or preſent grand period of the world's duration, his ſtature ſhall be ſo reduced, "that he will not be able to pluck a BERENGELAH, or the *egg-plant*, without the aſſiſtance of a hooked ſtick." The fact is, that theſe prodigies of remote antiquity, raiſed in the mind an admiration and an awe, which mounted into a ſpecies of idolatrous veneration for the original fabricators: and, while they beheld ſuch amazing proofs of the grandeur of

* See Mr Greaves's Pyramidographia, in the firſt volume of his works, edited by Dr. Birch, p. 131. 8vo. Lond. 1737.

† On the Indian Coſmogony, p. 93 of the firſt volume of the Hiſtory itſelf.

their minds, they thought they could not do less than accommodate them with a form in some degree proportioned to the magnitude of their intellectual powers.

Mr. Norden's seventh plate, equally beautiful as the others, exhibits a view of the grottos of the great TSCHABEL ESSELSELE, or *chained mountain*; and I could wish to have presented my subscribers with an engraving of that mountain, together with a view of the Canarah Rock, since they both soar alike into the air, with a kind of wild grandeur sufficient to awe the mind of the savage into veneration, in the same plate; but I have already gone beyond my intended limits in the expensive article of engravings, and they will therefore rest contented with his verbal description of them.

After giving an account of the *chained mountain* itself, so called from a boom or chain which formerly extended across the Nile, from its basis to a rock on the opposite shore, and barred the passage this way to an invading enemy, he proceeds to describe the adjoining grottos, "which are numerous; having their sides entirely covered with the MOST BEAUTIFUL HIEROGLYPHICS." *The light, entering only by* the outlet of each grotto, was scarcely sufficient to distinguish the various objects, but at length

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our traveller perceived an opening at the top, and began to make his ſketch." Being ſhortly after interrupted in his work by the Arabians aſſembling in multitudes, he was only able to delineate "four figures in high relief ſitting, and in their natural ſize, two of them male, and two of them female. The men who are in the middle have their arms folded acroſs the breaſt, (an attitude very common in the Indian caverns) and each woman takes hold of a man under the arm *." Mr. Norden, however, took a leſs haſty ſurvey of the famous grottos denominated SABABINATH, a name which *poſſibly* they may have derived from the ſpecies of ſuperſtition anciently practiſed in them. They are ſituated in the mountain bordering on the ſhore of the river Nile, called TSCHEBAT ELL KOFFERI; and the traveller muſt aſcend that mountain for two or three hours, before he can arrive at the firſt gate. "Through this gate you enter into a large ſaloon, ſupported by hexagonal pillars, contrived in the rock itſelf. The roofs are adorned with paintings, which even at preſent we diſtinguiſh extremely well; while the gold, with which they were originally decorated, glitters on all ſides. Here and there we perceive openings, which lead to other

* Ibid. p. 94

apart-

apartments; but as they are filled with rubbiſh, and as the paſſages into them are embaraſſed with it, few travellers chuſe to venture themſelves there. Above, there is another apartment, to which you may with difficulty arrive, by climbing up on the outſide of the mountain. It is not ſo extenſive a ſaloon as the former; but it is painted after a ſimilar manner, and, like it, communicates with other adjoining apartments*."

Mr. Greaves, in deſcribing the pyramid ſecond in magnitude, expreſſes his aſtoniſhment that no traveller before him had particularly noticed "two very ſtately and elaborate pieces of cavern architecture," by which that pyramid is bounded on the north and weſt ſides. The following deſcription of theſe rocky apartments, by that traveller, deſerves particular notice, not becauſe the ſtyle in which they are excavated at all reſembles that of Elephanta, but becauſe they bear a very ſtriking ſimilitude to the convents of the Talapoins, or prieſts of Boodh, deſcribed by Father Loubere, in his account of the kingdom of Siam, whither, in 1687, he went as ambaſſador from the king of France. There can be little doubt but that the ſuperſtition of Boodh, who, we ſhall preſently ſee, is

* Ibid. vol. ii. p. 34.

no

no other than the SOMMONACODOM, or ſtupendous ſtone deity of the Siameſe, came originally from Egypt—from that country where rocks and ſtones, hewn into a thouſand fanciful forms, firſt received the adoration of mankind: from the neighbourhood of thoſe lofty pyramids, the emblem of the SOLAR DEITY, and that coloſſal Sphynx, the ſymbol of the SUN in Leo and Virgo, which, majeſtic even in ruins, ſtill ſtrike with awe the aſtoniſhed ſpectator. The period of his arrival, however, on the ſhores of India, is involved in the profoundeſt obſcurity, and the greateſt ſcholars of Aſia have exerted upon that point, with various ſucceſs, their critical ſagacity. I ſhall preſently ſtate in brief what their ſeveral opinions are, reſerving, for a particular period of the enſuing hiſtory, the full inveſtigation of that perplexing event. For the preſent I ſhall only make one obſervation, as prefatory to the remarks immediately following, that, according to Loubere, their aſtronomers have fixed the death of Sommonacodom to the year before Chriſt 545; and remind the reader, that the date of the invaſion of Egypt, by Cambyſes, is fixed by Uſher to be in the year 525 preceding. A peculiar conjunction of the planets, Loubere informs us, about that period took place, when their firſt grand aſtronomical

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epocha commenced; all which circumſtances, if the intelligence can be depended on, tend ſtrongly to evince of what material uſe aſtronomy is towards rectifying the errors of chronology, and fixing the doubtful events of hiſtory. About thirty feet in depth, ſays Mr. Greaves, and more than one thouſand and four hundred feet in length, have theſe apartments been hewn out of the hard rock in a perpendicular line, and ſquared by the chiſſel, as he ſuppoſes, to ſerve as lodgings for the prieſts of the ſtupendous temple adjoining. This opinion of Mr. Greaves, I muſt obſerve, remarkably corroborates Mr. Bryant's judicious conjecture, that thoſe amazing fabrics were not *ſolely* intended for ſepulchres, but for obſervatories and temples, in which were celebrated the gloomy ſuperſtitious rites of the progeny of Cuſh *. Mr. Greaves proceeds to obſerve, that theſe caverns range along at a convenient diſtance, parallel to the two ſides above mentioned of this pyramid, "meeting at a right angle, and making a very fair and graceful proſpect." The entrance into them is by ſquare openings, hewn out of the rock, not exceeding in magnitude thoſe which he had deſcribed before as forming the entrance

* See Mr. Bryant's Analyſis of Ancient Mythology, vol. iii, p. 580.

of

of the firſt pyramid, and which he had repreſented as narrow and quadrangular. The chambers within, he obſerves, are likewiſe of a ſquare form, and well proportioned, covered and arched above with the natural rock; in moſt of which there was a paſſage opening into an interior chamber, but ſo obſtructed with rubbiſh, and ſo involved in darkneſs, as to forbid all penetration into their receſſes. Theſe chambers, it can ſcarcely be doubted, had ſome ſecret communication with the interior apartments of this pyramid, the entrance into which has, if ever known, been long ſince forgotten. M. De la Loubere, among many intereſting and curious particulars relative to the religious ſentiments and public rites of the Talapoins, informs us, that this order of Siameſe prieſts reſide in convents, which conſiſt of many little cells, ranged within a large ſquare incloſure; in the middle of this incloſure ſtands the temple. He then adds: "Certain PYRAMIDS ſtand near, and quite round the temple, which are all incloſed within four walls *." PYRAMIDS and OBELISKS form a diſtinguiſhing feature in the Egyptian architecture. The whole country was covered with the former; and the reader, by caſting

* See La Loubere's Hiſt. of Siam. in Harris's Collection of Voyages, vol. ii. p. 482.

his eye on the engraving, which represents the august remains of the temple of Luxore, in the Thebais, will observe that the attachment of the Egyptians to the latter symbol was not less remarkable. In that plate he will see two OBELISKS of astonishing height and magnitude; and since, wheresoever the Egyptians extended their influence, this particular mode of symbolizing the Deity seems very generally to have prevailed, a forcible argument may thence be deduced, that it *originated* among a people so notoriously devoted to hieroglyphic worship.

Thebes was at once the consecrated and the classic ground of Upper Egypt. There Science and Genius exhausted all their powers in the fabrication of that august temple to the Deity, of which one of the eight superb portals forms the frontispiece of the second part of this volume: stupendous monument of the piety of that nation, scarcely injured amidst the vicissitudes of the elements, and the revolution of near three thousand suns! The subterraneous recesses in this province, as described by the great traveller Pocock, are so prodigious, that they impress the mind with scarcely less astonishment and admiration than the exterior edifices. They are called, in the language of the country, BAB-IL-MELUKE, that

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is, the gate or court of the kings; and though, in the later periods of the empire, used as sepulchres for the sovereigns of Thebes, it is highly probable that they were anciently the residence of the living. Indeed, our traveller himself expresses a similar belief, when he describes his entrance among them as into "a sort of street on each side of which the rocky ground, about ten feet high, has rooms cut into it, some of them being supported with pillars; and, as there is not the least sign in the plain, of private buildings, I thought that these, in the very earliest times, might serve as houses, be the first invention after tents, and contrived as a better shelter from wind, and the cold of the nights *." Both Diodorus Siculus †, and Strabo ‡, mention these excavations as prodigies of human labour, amounting in number to above forty; of which number, however, the entrance into only seventeen could be discovered by Pocock, and no more than nine could be penetrated. Of these he has presented his readers with plans, of which, as they greatly illustrate every description of this kind, I lamented the

* Pocock's Description of the East, vol. i. p. 97. folio, Lond. 1743.

† Diod Sic lib 1. p. 43.

‡ Strabonis Geograph. lib. 17. p. 816.

want in deſcribing the Indian caverns. His verbal account of them is, however, very clear and intelligible, and I ſhall therefore inſert it in this place.

"The hills on each ſide of the plain are high ſteep rocks, and the whole place is covered with rough ſtones, that ſeem to have rolled down from them. The grottos are cut into the rock, in a moſt beautiful manner, in long rooms, or galleries, under the mountains, which are of a cloſe white free-ſtone, that cuts like chalk, and is as ſmooth as the fineſt ſtucco work." This deſcription cannot fail of bringing to the mind of the reader the account, in a preceding page, of the ſtories or galleries cut in the rock of Canarah, ſo greatly reſembling human habitations, as to have obtained for them the denomination of the city of Canarah. I ought likewiſe to have before ſtated, the very probable ſuppoſition of Mr. Hunter, that, however ſince hardened by time and weather, theſe excavations were probably made when the rock was in a ſofter ſtate, and cut like the chalky free-ſtone here mentioned by Pocock. He proceeds thus in his intereſting narration: "Theſe galleries are for the moſt part about ten feet in height and width; four or five of them, one within the other, from thirty

to

to fifty feet long, and from ten to fifteen feet high, generally lead to a ſpacious room, in which is ſeen the tomb of the king, with his figure cut in relief on the lid. In the farthermoſt room of another, the picture of the king is painted on the ſtone, at full length; both the ſides and the cielings of the chambers are ſculptured with hieroglyphics of birds and beaſts, and ſome of them painted, remaining as freſh as if they were but juſt finiſhed, though of ſuch remote antiquity. The ſepulchre marked A, (in his plate) is moſt beautifully adorned with hieroglyphics cut into the ſtone and painted. Over the door the beetle is cut in a circle, and there is a human figure ſitting on each ſide. The galleries within have hieroglyphics ſculptured on each ſide, firſt in a ſort of compartment next to the cieling, in manner of a frieze; lower, figures are cut out, repreſenting mummies; below theſe, for ſeven feet from the ground, are hieroglyphics all down the ſides, divided by lines into different columns. In the middle of the cieling there are figures of men for about three feet in breadth, with STARS on each ſide. Among the hieroglyphics I obſerved many GOATS heads *." On this relation I muſt requeſt permiſſion to obſerve, that as it ſeems abſurd to

* Travels, vol. i. p. 99.

place

place *human* beings among the ſtars, the beings, thus delineated on the cieling, muſt be of celeſtial origin, like thoſe groups of GENII and DEWTAHS who are portrayed on the walls of the Indian caverns; and, with reſpect to the goats heads, it will be remembered, that the goat was an animal ſacred to PAN, who, I have had occaſion to obſerve, was particularly worſhipped in a city of the Thebais, called, from that deity, PANOPOLIS, the modern AKMIN.

Having occaſion to mention this celebrated city, I cannot reſiſt the opportunity of bringing, from this authentic writer, a very convincing proof of what I have recently remarked, that the temples of Egypt were adorned with aſtronomical ſymbols, in the ſame manner as the ſubterraneous caverns were. This aſſertion the following curious paſſage ſtrikingly corroborates. Wandering over the extenſive ruins of PANOPOLIS, the attention of Dr. Pocock was attracted by a ſtone of ſtupendous dimenſions, one of thoſe that probably once adorned the top of the magnificent temple of that deity, but half buried in the ground. The part of this maſſy fragment, which protruded from the hill of ruins amidſt which it was involved, was eighteen feet in length, and on one ſide of it was "a very extraordinary ſculpture, which had been painted,

painted, and from which I concluded that it was a temple dedicated to the SUN. Within some ornaments there are four circles; in the inner circle there is a figure, probably representing the Sun: the spaces between the two next are divided into twelve parts; in the first, twelve birds are cut in like seals; in the next, twelve figures, defaced; which I conjectured might be the TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC. The outer circle, not divided, has in it figures of men, if I mistake not, to the same number. In each angle, between the outer circle and the square ornaments that are round it, is a figure which may possibly represent the four seasons. A wing extends along one side of it, from a sort of globe, marked out in lines, which probably had another wing extending in the same manner, it may be, over such another sculpture. The stones, and some others of a temple near, are so large, that they cannot move them; nor do they use stones in building, but" (who can read the relation, without the most poignant indignation!) " they break in pieces these fine morsels of antiquity, adorned with hieroglyphics, and make lime of them. The entrance of this temple seems to have been to the SOUTH, as that of the other was, probably, to the NORTH. Most of it is white stone, mixed with pebbles, and

and adorned with hieroglyphics: one of them has STARS cut on it, which without doubt covered part of the building *." But I muſt return from the *temples* to the *caverns* of Thebes. I muſt re-viſit thoſe gloomy ſepulchres of her departed monarchs, which, probably, in the earlieſt periods of the world, were the reſidence of the anceſtors of the human race. Let us once more, with ſilent ſtep, and with reverential awe, explore the hallowed depoſitaries of royal duſt!

Purſuing his lonely journey through thoſe ſubterraneous apartments, our author found one, in which was the ſarcophagus of a king, adorned with hieroglyphics in different columns, with figures of men, hawks, and bulls. The human figures were probably of the ſame nature with the beings above mentioned; and the hawk, or IBIS, is the known ſymbol of ISIS, as the bull, or APIS, was of OSIRIS. In another was ſculptured a figure with its arms folded acroſs the breaſt; over it a GLOBE, and a man kneeling on each ſide. Dr. Pocock's deſcription of theſe ſepulchral grottos concludes with an account of one of uncommon magnitude, in which, ſays he, " is a ſtatue of a man with a ſceptre in his hand, and on the cieling is a large figure of another man painted at top, with a par-

* Pocock's Travels, vol. i. p. 78.

ticular

ticular ſort of ſceptre in his hand, and wings hanging down lower than his feet," (from this deſcription, probably HERMES) "and covering the whole body: this is a very extraordinary figure, and the painting exceedingly freſh. At the entrance, on each ſide, are four men, cut into the ſtone, above the natural ſize, having heads of hawks, and other animals: on the inſide, a tortoiſe, and a man with a goat's head, are cut within a circle on each of the Pilaſters. At the entrance of K, a large bull's head is cut in relief, &c." The tortoiſe, the TESTUDO of the celeſtial ſphere, is the Hindoo ſymbol of ſtrength, upon which account Veeſhnu, in the ſecond, or BARA-AVATAR, aſſumes that form to ſupport the globe ſinking in the bed of the ocean. The head, and part of the body, of an immenſe BULL, we have obſerved, iſſues from the centre of the great pagoda of Jaggernaut; and that the rock through which the Ganges ruſhes into Hindoſtan, is called the COW-HEAD ROCK. It is readily granted, that to whatſoever purpoſe they were *originally* devoted, theſe particular caverns were indubitably afterwards converted into ſepulchres; which circumſtance might poſſibly lead Mr Ovington into the error of aſſerting that the Indian caverns likewiſe were burying-places. Two other caverns,

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however, of very ample dimenſions, which he viſited the following day, were certainly not dormitories for the dead, but habitations of the living, or ſacred receſſes for the performance of the moſt awful rites of religion. To the firſt of theſe he deſcended by a flight of ten ſteps, cut in the rock, which led to a room in which are ſquare pillars, likewiſe hewn out of the ſolid rock. "Beyond that there is a long room with pillars ranging on each ſide: all the apartments are in like manner adorned with hieroglyphics; but the ſtone is ſealed in ſuch a manner, and is ſo black in ſome of the firſt apartments, that there is great reaſon to think the place has been damaged by fire. Beyond theſe rooms, the apartments extend to the right, there being ſeveral ſteps deſcending downwards: one part leads to a gallery, cut round the rock, which has ſome apartments on one ſide. In theſe, as well as in the apartments of the other grotto marked B, are cavities cut perpendicular down to other chambers below, where I ſaw doors and openings, and where, probably, there are as many apartments above. One would almoſt imagine that theſe places were habitations for the living, and poſſibly might be cut under the palaces of the kings of the Thebes, if they were not the palaces themſelves." Of the ſecond of theſe extenſive

tensive caverns, marked B. in his plate, Dr. Pocock has given no particular description, but, if we may judge from the plate which exhibits the plan upon which it was formed, it was fabricated of dimensions, and hewn with toil not less astonishing.

Before I conclude the account of the Egyptian caverns by this celebrated traveller, the reader may possibly not be displeased if I state here, from the page immediately following that account, the dimensions of a vast colossal statue, which he discovered in some ruins adjoining to the grottos just described, and accurately measured. *It will rescue from the suspicion of hyperbole*, the account given by me from Niebuhr, of the dimensions of the grand bust in the Elephanta cavern, the centre face of which, he will recollect, alone measured, in length, five feet; that of the same face the nose measured one foot and a half; that the width, from the ear only, to the middle of the nose, was three feet four inches; and that the stupendous breadth of the whole figure, between the shoulders, was near twenty feet *.

" This large colossal statue," says Dr. Pocock, " is broken about the middle of the trunk; the head is six feet broad: from the top of the

* See page 247 of this volume.

head, to the bottom of the neck, it meaſures eleven feet, and ſo it does from the bottom of the neck to the navel. It is twenty-one feet broad at the ſhoulders; the ear is three feet long, and one foot four inches broad; and the foot is four feet eight inches broad." In another court of this ruined temple he ſaw the remains of "two ſtatues of black Granite: that to the weſt, which is in a ſitting poſture, meaſured, from the hands only to the elbow, five feet; and thence to the ſhoulder, four feet. The ſtatue, on the eaſt, is three feet five inches long in the foot: lying at a diſtance from it was the head, with the cap; it is three feet ſix inches long, and the ear is one foot in length*." If admiration ſhould be excited in the mind of the reader, on peruſing the account of the dimenſions of theſe ſtatues, to what an exalted point will his aſtoniſhment be elevated, when he caſts his eye upon the ſubſequent page, deſcriptive of the celebrated ſtatue of MEMNON, ſtanding upon a pedeſtal, which is alone above thirty feet in height, and in width near twenty feet! I need not acquaint the claſſical reader, that this is the famous ſtatue erected in the temple of SERAPIS, which is affirmed, on the firſt appulſe of the beam of the orient ſun, to

* Pocock's Deſcription of the Eaſt, vol. I. p. 101.

have

have emited a diſtinctly audible ſound. It is repreſented, by Dr. Pocock, as compoſed of a particular ſort of porous dark granite, ſuch as he never ſaw before, and much reſembling the eagle-ſtone. The ſtatue itſelf is broken; but of the whole amazing maſs, the fabrication of which one would think muſt have exhauſted a quarry, ſome idea may be formed, from the magnitude of the leg and foot, ſtill remaining entire. Of theſe an engraving, entirely covered with the inſcriptions of Greek and Roman travellers, who bore their atteſtation to its having ſent forth ſuch a ſound, on the riſing of the ſun, appears oppoſite to page 104 of his firſt volume; and he found the height of the leg, "from the bottom of the foot to the top of the knee, to be about nineteen feet; from the bottom of the feet to the ankle, two feet ſix inches; to the top of the inſtep, four feet; the foot itſelf being five feet broad, and the leg four feet in depth *." Stupendous as theſe menſurations muſt appear, even theſe appear comparatively ſmall, when we conſider what is related in Pliny, concerning the wonderful SPHYNX, for that writer affirms, that the head was no leſs than one hundred and two feet in circumference; that the figure itſelf was ſixty-two

* Pocock, vol. I. p. 102.

feet

feet high from the belly to the crown of the head; and that its entire length was 143 feet. It ought to be remarked here, that Pocock, in his description of the Sphynx, has inaccurately cited Pliny, as stating the length of the figure to be only 113 feet; "whereas," says he, "my account makes it 130 feet, which are seventeen feet more than Pliny *." But the real number of feet mentioned in Pliny is 143, as stated above; and therefore his dimensions, which are probably more exact, are thirteen feet less than the number of feet assigned by the Roman Naturalist. Of its ancient altitude of sixty-three feet, only twenty-seven now remain above the surface; so that about thirty-six feet must be buried in the accumulated sand and gravel.

The reader has been just informed, that these statues are of hard black granite, as are almost all the ancient statues of Egypt. This circumstance suggested to Mr. Volney, one of the most enlightened travellers that ever explored the east, the idea that the ancient Egyptians, to whose genius, talents, and learning, posterity is so deeply indebted, were BLACKS likewise, since he thinks it was natural for them to choose that their statues should be composed of marble of

* Plinii, Nat. Hist. lib. 36. c. 12. and p. 390. of my edition, by Aldus: and Pocock, vol. 1. p. 46.

the

the ſame colour with themſelves. The idea firſt occurred to him, on a minute inveſtigation of the ſphynx; for when he beheld her black complexion, and her features preciſely thoſe of a negro; and when he recollected, that Herodotus had long ago aſſerted his belief, "that the Colchi were a colony of Egyptians, becauſe, like them, they had black ſkins and frizzled hair;" M. Volney immediately concluded, that the ancient Egyptians were real negroes, of the ſame ſpecies with all the natives of Africa. He has added to this ſuggeſtion many very ingenious and intereſting reflections. He lays it down as a general rule, that the features of a nation are a kind of a monument capable, in many caſes, of elucidating and aſcertaining the teſtimony of hiſtory concerning the origin of nations. "How is our aſtoniſhment excited, when we behold the preſent barbariſm and ignorance of the COPTS, deſcended from the ancient Egyptians, men of ſuch profound genius, and ſuch exalted ſcience; and when we reflect, that to the race of negroes, at preſent our ſlaves, the objects of ſuch extreme contempt among Europeans, that it ſeems to be a problem among us, whether the underſtanding of negroes be capable of the ſame culture with that of WHITE MEN, yet that to this race we

owe

owe our arts, our ſciences, and even the very uſe of ſpeech *."

I ſhall hereafter endeavour to profit by theſe judicious remarks of M. Volney; and when my hiſtory ſhall have at length commenced, ſhall apply this rule of diſcrimination to ſome of the moſt venerated ſtatues of India. It is not a little remarkable, that according to Herodotus, there were two Ethiopias, one in Africa, the other in Aſia; and if the Delta of Egypt was peopled by the Thebaic Ethiopians, it is, at leaſt, poſſible, that the peninſula of Egypt might have for its firſt inhabitants the Ethiopians of Aſia. In addition to M. Volney's remarks on this ſubject, I muſt alſo be permitted to obſerve, that the ancients really did, in fabricating their ſtatues of men and objects, attend to the complexion, properties, or country to which they belonged. Mr. Addiſon, in his Travels, elegantly remarks, that he never ſaw any ſtatue of SLEEP that was not of *black marble*; alluding, doubtleſs, to the night, which is appropriated to ſleep. All the ſtatues of the NILE, and in particular that fine one at preſent to be ſeen in the garden of the Vatican at Rome, are of black marble, emblematical of the colour of the Ethiopians, amidſt

* See M. Volney's Travels in Egypt, vol. I. p. 83.

whoſe

whoſe lofty mountains that river has its ſource.

> " Uſque coloratis amnis devexus ab INDIS."
>
> VIRG. Georg. 4.

This quotation from Virgil, concerning the Nile, is highly deſerving of notice, becauſe it affords additional evidence of what was aſſerted in the early pages of the Geographical Diſſertation, that the name of INDIA was extended by the ancients to Ethiopia; and that, in fact, from their ignorance of the geography of the higher Aſia, India and Ethiopia were ſometimes conſidered as the ſame country. The reader will recollect, that one of the idols, in the pagoda of Jaggernaut, is deſcribed by captain Hamilton as A HUGE BLACK STONE, OF A PYRAMIDAL FORM; and the SOMMONACODOM, being the repreſentative of the Egyptian god and prophet BOODH, among the Siameſe, is of the ſame ſable complexion. In the deſcription from the Ayeen Akbery, inſerted in page 198, of an immenſe temple erected to the ſun, by an ancient rajah, the reader has been made acquainted, that in the front of the gate there ſtood a pillar of black ſtone, of an octagonal form, fifty cubits high; he will hereafter be informed, from Tavernier, that in the pagoda of Benares, that traveller likewiſe obſerved a conſpicuous idol of black ſtone; and that the ſtatue of Creeſhna, in his celebrated temple

of MATHURA, is of black marble. It is very remarkable, that one of the principal ceremonies incumbent upon the priests of these stone-deities, according to Tavernier, is to anoint them daily with odoriferous oils, a circumstance which immediately brings to our remembrance the similar practice of Jacob, who, after the famous vision of the celestial ladder, recorded in Scripture, *took the stone which he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a* PILLAR, *and poured oil upon the top of it.* It is added, that *he called the name of that place* BETH-EL; that is, *the house of* God, as the patriarch himself explains the word, *for this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be called* GOD'S HOUSE, Gen. xxviii. 12. This passage evinces, of how great antiquity is the custom of considering stones in a sacred light, as well as the anointing them with consecrated oil. From this conduct of Jacob, and this Hebrew appellative, the learned Bochart, with great ingenuity and reason, insists that the name and veneration of the sacred stones called BÆTYLI, so celebrated in all pagan antiquity, were derived *. These Bætyli were stones of a round form; they were supposed to be animated by means of magical incantations, with a portion of the deity; they were consulted, on occasions of great and pressing

* Vide Bocharti Sacra Geograph. lib. i. p. 58.

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emergency, as a kind of divine oracles, and were suspended, either round the neck, or on some other part of the body, of the enraptured devotee. Of these consecrated stones, some were dedicated to Jupiter, and others to the SUN; but they were considered as in a more particular manner sacred to SATURN, who is fabled to have swallowed one of these stones in the place of Jupiter, when he was seized with the sanguinary furor of devouring his children. The fable proceeds to affirm, that the god having found his mistake, and vomited it up again, this stone was preserved near the temple of Delphi, where care was taken *to anoint it daily with oil*, and to cover it with wool, that had grown on the days of the SATURNALIAN festival *. The above relation affords a very remarkable proof (and it is very far from being the only one of the kind which these volumes will exhibit) how closely the pagan world imitated, and how basely they perverted the religious rites of the ancient and venerable patriarchs. Thus, the setting up of a stone, by this holy person, in grateful memory of the celestial vision vouchsafed him from above, and

* See Stephanus on the word Thaumasius, and also Pausanias, who more amply relates the story. The meaning of this curious fable seems to be, that Saturn, or Time, (as the word Chronos, elegantly called by Horace, *Tempus edax rerum*, signifies) devours whatever he produces; his offspring are the revolving years.

as a monument of the divine goodneſs, which had ſo conſpicuouſly guarded him in his journey, probably became the occaſion of all the idolatry paid, in ſucceeding ages, to thoſe ſhapeleſs maſſes of unhewn ſtone, of which ſo many aſtoniſhing remains are ſcattered up and down the Aſiatic, and, I may add, the European, world.

These idol-repreſentations of Deity, it has been obſerved, were at firſt rugged and ſhapeleſs as the rock from which they were torn: and I am of opinion this argument may be fairly urged in favour of the high antiquity of many of theſe rude and formleſs blocks, both of wood and ſtone, that are at preſent honoured with adoration in the moſt venerated pagodas of Hindoſtan. As mankind themſelves grew more poliſhed, and as ſtatuary improved, their deities were repreſented under forms leſs hideous and diſguſting; and thoſe forms were accommodated to the new notions of deity which their earlieſt ſpeculations in phyſics, and then increaſing knowledge of aſtronomy, inſpired. The maſſy unhewn ſtones ſoon ſhot up into graceful pyramids, and lofty obeliſks, after the model of the ſolar ray, and the aſcending flame. The pyramidal form, however, did not univerſally prevail. Some of thoſe mighty maſſes were hewn into ſquare columns, obtuſe at the ſummit, whoſe four poliſhed ſides ſymbolized the four elements,

or

or were carved to face the four cardinal points. The earth, says Eusebius, was represented by a cylindrical stone. The octagon black column, mentioned in the preceding page, might possibly have been fabricated in allusion to some similar notion deriving its birth from physics and astronomy. Even the form of the CROSS, as allusive to the four elements, was no unusual symbol in the pagan world; and indeed Tavernier, as we shall hereafter see, describes two of the principal pagodas of India, Benares and Mathura, as erected in the form of VAST CROSSES, of which each wing is equal in extent.

Let not the piety of the believing Christian be offended at the preceding assertion, that the CROSS was one of the most usual symbols among the hieroglyphics of Egypt and India. Equally honoured in the Gentile and the Christian world, this emblem of universal nature, of that world, to whose four quarters its diverging radii pointed, decorated the hands of most of the sculptured images in the former country; and in the latter stamped its form upon the most majestic of the shrines of their deities. It repeatedly occurs on the Pamphylian and other obelisks; and the antiquaries, Kircher and Mountfaucon, have both honoured it with particular notice. The CRUX ANSATA of Hermes is represented by the former as a most sublime hieroglyphic, as a most

myſterious and powerful amulet, endowed with an aſtoniſhing virtue, and as exhibiting one of the moſt compleat mathematical figures; "habentem longitudinem atque latitudinem, et quatuor angulos rectos;" poſſeſſing at once both length and breadth, and having four right angles, at once alluſive to the four cardinal points of the world, and typical of the four elements. In pages 277, 279, 280, and 281, of the third volume of his Oedipus, are ſymbolical repreſentations, copied from the Barberine obeliſk of the four elements; FIRE, deſignated by a figure of Oſiris, as the ANIMA MUNDI, or ſoul of the world, with a hawk's head; the AIR, by a figure bearing on his head a cap adorned with an orb, and WINGS, the uſual emblem of the AIR on Egyptian monuments; the EARTH, by that of ISIS, the great mother of all things, with a calathus on her head, containing ears of grain, a bunch of flowers, and the horns of a cow, all emblems, as well as the ſwelling boſom which the goddeſs diſplays, of fertility and plenty; and, laſtly, WATER, typified by a ſtatue bearing the head and face of the IBIS, a bird ſacred to the Nile, and with the horns lunæ ſextilis, of the MOON, which in the month of Auguſt was ſuppoſed to aſſiſt in cauſing the inundations of that river. All theſe figures, thus emblematical of the ELEMENTS, which are highly worthy a minute examination, bear the hallowed

hallowed croſs with its circular handle, by which they were collectively and ſtrikingly repreſented. To the conſideration of the ſame ſubject, Mountfaucon has alſo devoted a few intereſting pages, which will hereafter claim our attention.

If Mr. Volney's argument, that the colour of the ſtatue frequently denotes the deſcent and nation of the perſon ſculptured, be allowed, I truſt my own humble aſſertion, that the qualities and property of the object are often pointed out by the ſame means, will not be refuſed its weight, becauſe it is founded on very ancient and reſpectable authority. I ſhall briefly ſtate that authority. Porphyry, cited by Euſebius, expreſly ſays, that the ancients repreſented the Deity by a black ſtone, becauſe his nature is obſcure and inſcrutable by man *. The ancient Arabians, who lived in a region of rock, according both to Suidas † and Strabo ‡, continued to a very late period to worſhip the image of their tutelary god Mars, erected at Petra under the figure of a ſquare black ſtone; for *black*, ſay theſe authors, was thought a proper colour to veil the ſolemn myſteries of religion. The ſame rule ſeems to have been obſerved in ſtatues fabricated of wood, in the formation of which the

* Euſeb. de Præp Evang lib. 3 l. 3. p 31. edit. Baſil. 1542.

† Suidas in voce Deus Mars

‡ Strabonis Geograph. lib. 17.

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diſtinguiſhing attribute or function of the deity was generally attended to. Pauſanias has enumerated the ſeveral kinds of wood made uſe of for this purpoſe. As the ebony, cypreſs, cedar, oak, yew, and box trees. Thus, to the formation of thoſe of Jupiter, the ſovereign of gods and men, the oak, the monarch of the woods, was devoted Hence the myrtle, ſacred to Venus, compoſed the beautiful ſtatue of the queen of love. The olive, a tree conſecrated to ſcience, of which whole groves adorned Athens, the ſeat of learning and philoſophy, gladly ſubmitted to the axe to form the ſtatue of Minerva, the *patron of the arts*. Of the infernal deities the funereal cypreſs, and the baleful yew uſually formed the gloomy and inauſpicious images.

It is now high time to conclude this excurſion to the caverns of the Thebais, and to ſtate the reſult of the enquiry. It remains for me to ſhew, that the excurſion itſelf was not entirely unneceſſary; but, by producing ſome more particular proofs, as well as by a few ſtriking and indiſputable traits, to demonſtrate that the mythology of the Hindoos and Egyptians had the ſame origin, and in reality, even at preſent, are not greatly diſſimilar. Many proofs of a general nature have been already adduced, and more ſtill will be pointed out in the ſecond chapter of this

Diſſer-

Diſſertation *; when, after having deſcribed the pagodas, I ſhall proceed more minutely to conſider the theological rites now practiſed in them, and certain cuſtoms and maxims originating in the ſolemnities of religion, common to both nations. For the preſent I ſhall only remark, that there ſeems to have prevailed, in Egypt, a more ancient mythology than we have as yet received any ſatisfactory account of; for though the ſtatues of the Nile, and thoſe in the Delta, might be BLACK, poſſibly becauſe fabricated by an Ethiopian race, yet we know from Euſebius, whom I muſt quote at length in my account of the Indian coſmogony, that the great CNEPH, that moſt ancient Divinity of Egypt, was a being of a DARK BLUE complexion †, the colour of the heavenly region from which he deſcended. I muſt alſo remark, that though the Sommonacodom be a black ſtone, as repreſenting Boodh, who came to India from a nation of blacks, and though Creeſhna was ſo called from his black complexion, yet we have certain information from Sir William Jones, who I muſt likewiſe hereafter cite more at length on this curious ſubject, that the great ſtatue of NARAYEN, or the Spirit of God,

* The reader will find this parallel from the middle of page 382, to the end of page 397, in the ſecond part of this volume.
† Vide Euſebius de Præp. Evang. lib. 3. cap 11.

who at the beginning of time floated on the waters, as that ſtatue is now to be ſeen elevated in the great reſervoir of CATMANDU, the capital of Nepaul, is formed of BLUE MARBLE *. Cneph, therefore, and Narayen, are evidently the ſame deity, under two different appellations.

Euſebius, in his treatiſe, recently cited, De Preparatione Evangelica, which is a wonderful mine of oriental theological ſcience, and contains many fragments of the more ancient philoſophers of Aſia, now loſt, aſſerts, from Horus-Apollo, that the old Egyptians ſymbolized the world by a BLUE ſerpent, with YELLOW ſcales; that is, as Horus-Apollo himſelf explains it, the firmament ſpangled with ſtars. In a preceding quotation, from M. Sonnerat, on the Indian mythology, the reader muſt have obſerved ideas very conſonant to this in the manner in which their painters deſignated the planet SANI, or Saturn, *viz.* as a divinity of a BLUE colour, inveſted with ſerpents in a circle; and, in fact, to Euſebius's account it may be added, that in our editions of Horapollo, he himſelf deſcribes this mundane ſerpent, the Agathodaimon of Egypt, as in a circular poſition; for it is the ſerpent wreathed into a circle, by holding his tail in his mouth †. By this they proba-

* See Sir W Jones in the Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 261.

† Serpentem pingunt, ſays Horapollo, qui ſuam ipſius caudam rodat, variis interſtinctam ſquamis. Per ſquamas, quidem, STELLAS

probably meant to ſhadow out the rotundity of the world; or, ſince the ſerpent, thus ſculptured, was, among the Egyptians, the common emblem of eternity, they might poſſibly intend to intimate the old atheiſtical doctrine of its eternal duration.

It has already been obſerved, in the Geographical Diſſertation *, that Sir W. Jones is inclined to derive the name of the river of Egypt, from the Sanſcreet word NILA, or *blue*; and he cites Dionyſius, who expreſsly calls the Nile *an azure ſtream*, in corroboration of his opinion. Now it is exceedingly ſingular, that the Indus, in the early part of its courſe ſhould be called the NILAB, from the *blue* caſt of its waters. Indeed one large branch of the Indus ſtill bears that name: and, poſſibly, it was the ſimilitude of their names, which led Alexander into that enormous error, recorded in Arrian, of imagining, upon his arrival at the banks of the Indus, that he had diſcovered the ſources of the Nile. But let us proceed to ſtate ſome farther particulars, in which this ſimilitnde is ſtill more directly and diſtinctly viſible.

STELLAS, quibus cælum, ſeu mundus diſtinctus eſt, obſcure indicantes. Vide Hori Apollonis Hieroglyphica, p. 8. edit. duodecimo, 1631.

* See the foregoing Diſſertation in page 149, and Major Rennel's remark upon the colour of the Nilab, there cited.

If Brahma, in the act of creation, be painted in the pagodas floating over the surface of the vast watery abyss, while he reclines upon the expanded leaf of the Lotos; exactly in the same attitude, and recumbent upon the same sacred plant, does the figure of Osiris constantly occur, in all the monuments of Egyptian antiquity. Instances of the latter deity, thus designated, may be seen by the inquisitive reader in Kircher, Kæmpfer, Mountfaucon, and in the curious and elaborate work of M. D'Ancarville, who has attempted, from a series of commemorative coins and medals, to give us an history of the earliest progress of the arts, and the diffusion of superstitious rites throughout the ancient world. In the first volume also of this history, I shall be happy, from my own rather extensive collection made for the elucidation of this history, to present my subscribers with engravings of some of the more remarkable representations on ancient coins and sculptures; particularly of OSIRIS UPON THE LOTOS; THE SERPENT WORSHIP; and THE MUNDANE EGG; all of which notions were as familiar to the ancient Hindoo sages as ever they were to the Egyptian, Persian, and Greek philosophers; and, as appears to me, at a period far more remote than, from any remaining annals of these latter nations, it can be proved they flou-

rished

riſhed among them. Theſe plates, however expenſive they may be to the author, will prove of infinite uſe towards illuſtrating the comparative deſcription, which it is my intention to exhibit, of the oriental coſmogonies, and will, in particular, throw great light on the ancient hiſtory and mythology of Hindoſtan.

The laſt of thoſe celebrated antiquaries mentioned above, M. D'Hancarville, decidedly corroborates what I have before remarked on the ancient worſhip of ſtones, gradually improving in form and grace, from the rude block adored in Scythia, as the repreſentation of Deity, to the poliſhed and elegant ſtatues of Greece;—Greece which, he obſerves, added nothing but beauty to the idea of the Deity, entertained by thoſe who conceived his majeſty and attributes to be moſt properly repreſented by gigantic ſculptures, and maſſy ſymbols. The commencing of his laborious inveſtigations by *medals*, rather than by *deſigns*, was a ſtep equally novel and judicious, ſince the engraved tablet of braſs and copper, as I have in my preface obſerved, with reſpect to thoſe dug up in India, bids fair to remain, when the ſculptured ſtone ſhall have crumbled into duſt, and the tints of the moſt glowing picture ſhall have been totally obliterated. Ancient coins, he ſays, not only preſerve impreſſed the figures under which the gods were worſhipped, but in their very formation are emblematical of thoſe figures.

According to Plutarch, he remarks, that the most ancient Greek coins are of an *obeliscal* form, and intended to imitate the solar ray: they represent javelins, or, to use his own words, *les belemnites*, commonly called the *thunder stone*, of which javelins were anciently made. Of coins, bearing this obeliscal form, there is great variety exhibited in his first volume: but it was not so much my intention to mark this, though a circumstance extremely curious, as the succeeding observation. M. d'Hancarville asserts, that the *belemnite* coins, which represent the thunder, that is, the power of the Almighty, and, consequently, the *Deity by his symbol*, are often found surrounded by the Tamara leaf, to signify that thunder is engendered in the region of clouds created by the water, near which the Tamara constantly grows. For the proof of this assertion, he refers us to the valuable collection of an ingenious gentleman of our own country; since, in the Museum of Mr. Charles Townley, he observes, that the SACRED FIRE on an ancient candelabre of white marble, is represented as surrounded by a tamara leaf*. Now the plant of the tamara is the same with the NELUMBO of Linnæus. It is an aquatic plant, of the genus of the Nymphæa, and, if I may judge from a print of it in Kempfer †, not dissimilar from

* See M D'Ancarville's Recherches sur l'Origine et les Progres des Arts de la Grèce, tom. i. p. 6. edit. 4to. A Londres. 1785.

† See Kempfer's Hist. of Japan, vol. ii. and plate 37. The reader

from the LOTOS, on which Brahma and Osiris float upon the chaos. The candelabre of Mr. Townley, therefore, appears at once to resolve the whole mystery; for since we have repeatedly observed from Plutarch, that Osiris is the sun; and since Sir William Jones informs us, that the names of Brahma, Veeshnu, and Seeva, coalesce, and form the mystical word OM; a word which in the ancient Sanscreet character is thus represented, ॐ, and which character signifies neither more nor less than the SOLAR FIRE: the consequence is, that the ancient Egyptians and Indians adored the same Deity, under two different appellations; that Deity which I have proved was so universally worshipped in Persia, and throughout Asia, THE SUN.

As Osiris and Brahma thus nearly resemble each other, at least in the paintings and sculptures of the east, so if we examine the character and attributes of SEEVA, the destroying power of this country, his functions exhibit too close a parallel *to those of the* TYPHON, *or evil genius* of Egypt, to permit us to hesitate one moment in pronouncing that they originally sprang from one central and common source.

Every step as we have advanced in this retro-

reader who possesses, and will turn to Kempfer's curious book, will there see the great God of Japan, with innumerable arms, all adorned with various symbols, seated upon the TAMARA

spect

ſpect upon the *caverns of Upper Egypt*, and the mythological ſculptures illuſtrative of the ancient worſhip of that country, increaſing evidence ſeems to ariſe, that they were originally invented by the ſame ingenious race, and fabricated by the ſame ſkilful hands. Travellers, who have viſited Egypt in periods far more recent than thoſe in which the above-cited authors journeyed thither, confirm the truth of their relation, in regard both to the number and extent of the excavations, the beauty of the ſculptures, and their ſimilitude to thoſe carved in the *caverns of India*. The final reſult, therefore, of this extended inveſtigation, is, that in the remoteſt periods there has exiſted a moſt intimate connection between the two nations, and that colonies, emigrating from Egypt to India, or from India to Egypt, tranſported their deities into the country in which they reſpectively took up their abode. But as the Brahmin, if he quit his native ſhore, violates the precepts of his religion, of the two hypotheſes, *that* is the more probable, which aſſigns the fabrication of them to the enterprizing and ingenious progeny of Mizraim. When we farther conſider, that ſome of theſe travellers, more intimately exploring the Egyptian caverns, and more minutely examining the ſculptures with which they are adorned, have poſitively aſſerted, that they diſcovered among

among them the figures of the Gods,* JAGANAUT, GANEES, and VEESHNU, we can hardly refuse our assent to an opinion supported by such strong evidence. "Opposite Miniah," says M. Savary in his thirtieth Letter on Egypt, "is the village of Gerabia; and, farther up, that of Saouadi. Here the grottos of the Thebais begin, famous for the austerity of the Anchorets, who retired hither during the primitive ages of Christianity. They extend for twenty leagues, as far as facing Manfelout, and were excavated by the ancient Egyptians. The hieroglyphics, found in them, attest their antiquity." To those who are decidedly of opinion, that the Indians are descended from HAM, by RAMA, the son of CUSH, the pointed similitude in these and innumerable other instances, between them and the Egyptians, will appear by no means surprising, but how far that opinion may be probable is a subject which in the ensuing history, will be considered at some extent.

Other writers, indulging a still wider scope of conjecture, have traced to Ethiopia, that country of eternal rock, the original fabri-

* These, in particular, are the sentiments of M. CHEVALIER, many years governor of CHANDERNAGORE. See Savary's Letters, vol. ii. p 6.

cators of this kind of cavern-temple. Their opinion is founded upon the deſcription which Ludolphus * gives of the early and flouriſhing ſtate of architecture in that country, evident in the vaſt ruins of the ancient capital of AXUMA, and of many magnificent temples cut out of the live rock. Indeed, in confirmation of the opinion, that religious ceremonies in Ethiopia, at no very remote period, were performed in caverns, I may obſerve, that, in an edition of that author, now lying before me, there is a very curious engraving on the lid of a coffin, dug up, ſays Ludolph, in a Chriſtian church-yard, near the high-way called *Priſcillas*, which repreſents the participation of the holy communion, by ſome early Chriſtian converts, in the dark receſs of a ſacred grotto. A remark of Mr. Hunter may alſo with more propriety be noted here than it could have been before; that many circumſtances would induce us to ſuppoſe the Indian caverns to have been conſtructed by a very different race of men from thoſe who at this day inhabit the country. The reaſons, which that gentleman aſſigns for holding this opinion, are founded upon the natural indolence that diſtinguiſhes the preſent inhabitants, apparently incapacitating

* Ludolphus's Hiſt. Ethiop. p. 170. edit. 1682.

capacitating them for works of ſuch enormous labour; and upon their general ignorance of that graceful elegance of form and proportion of feature which conſtitute the principal beauty of ſculpture, and which, in ſo remarkable a manner, diſtinguiſh the majority of the figures juſt deſcribed. " But, farther, it is natural to ſuppoſe that thoſe artiſts would take the model of their work from among themſelves, theſe figures, however, are very far from reſembling the preſent race of Indians. The general form of the body is more robuſt and muſcular; but the moſt remarkable difference lies in the countenance, *which is broad and full; the noſe flat; the lips, particularly the under-lip, remarkably thick*; and the whole combination of features of a drowſy appearance, very unlike that acute and ſprightly look which diſtinguiſhes the natives of Hindoſtan."*

Since both the Egyptians and Ethiopians were the undoubted deſcendants of Ham, as poſſibly might be the Hindoos; and conſequently, ſince all muſt be ſuppoſed to have been infected with the original idolatry of Chaldæa, that primeval country, where their an-

 ceſtors

* Archæologia, vol. vii. p. 301.

ceſtors ſo long reſided; I ſhall conclude this prolonged chapter, by preſenting the reader with an extract from the ſame prophet whom I cited in a former page, in elucidation of the ſuperſtitious rites practiſed in the myſtic cell of Egypt, and of the ſculptures portrayed on the walls, both of thoſe cells and the caves of India. Whoever attentively conſiders what, from various authors, and ſome of ſuch unimpeachable veracity as Niebuhr, Hunter, and Perron, has been before related, concerning the ſplendid *regal* ornaments that decorate the *head* and *neck*; the *zones*, jewelled or ſerpentine, that gird round the *waiſt* of the Indian ſtatues; whoever, in India, has ſeen the profuſion of vermilion or ſaffron, with which, according to his caſt, the devout Hindoo, at the performance of his ſacred JUGGEN, marks both his own forehead and that of the Deity he adores, muſt agree with me, that no alluſion to thoſe ornaments can be apparently more direct, and no deſcription of the images themſelves more accurate, than the following in Ezekiel. Under the character of AHOLIBAH, an abandoned proſtitute, does JEHOVAH thus parabolically ſtigmatize the idolatrous devotion of the apoſtate Judah.—*She doated upon*

upon the Assyrians, her neighbours; captains and rulers, clothed most gorgeously.—And, when she saw men portrayed upon the walls, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity; then, as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doated upon them, and sent messengers unto them unto Chaldea. And, again, towards the close of the same chapter, it is said—" *Moreover this they have done unto me:* WHEN THEY HAD SLAIN THEIR CHILDREN TO THEIR IDOLS; *then they came, the same day, unto my sanctuary to profane it.—And, furthermore, ye have sent for men to come from far, unto whom a messenger was sent, and lo! they came, for whom* THOU DIDST WASH THYSELF, (that is, perform ablutions,) PAINTEDST THINE EYES, AND DECKEDST THYSELF WITH ORNAMENTS. *And sattest upon a stately bed, with a* TABLE (that is, an altar) PREPARED BEFORE IT, WHEREUPON THOU HAST SET MINE INCENSE AND MINE OIL. *And a voice of a multitude, being at ease, was with her, and with the men*

 of

*of the common sort were brought Sabians,** (that is, worshippers of the planets) *from the wilderness*, WHICH PUT BRACELETS UPON THEIR HANDS, AND BEAUTIFUL CROWNS UPON THEIR HEADS." †

* The term SABIAN, Sir W. Jones derives from SABA, a host; meaning THE HOST OF HEAVEN.

† Ezekiel, Chap. XXIII. v. 14, 15.

END OF THE FIRST CHAPTER ON THE RELIGION OF HINDOSTAN.

APPENDIX.

HAVING had occasion to mention so repeatedly the rites of MITHRA, I trust the reader will excuse my adding to this chapter of Dissertations, the following Ode to that fabulous deity of the Persians, which was printed in the body of a Tragedy, published by me, two or three years since (but never intended for exhibition) and entitled, PANTHEA; or, THE CAPTIVE BRIDE. Like all the other productions of my unfortunate Muse, PANTHEA has met with very indifferent treatment from the Public, and slumbers neglected in the warehouse of Mr. Richardson. That her slumber may not be *eternal*, I thus take the liberty of re-introducing her to the public notice. The Tragedy was written upon the *Greek model*; but, from that circumstance not being stated in the title page, it was criticised in all the Reviews according to the rules of the *English drama*, and, consequently, was doomed to oblivion, without ever being read. I indulge a hope, that the ODE, here inserted, and an impartial examination of the Tragedy itself, which was intended for the Study, and not the Stage; will be the means of rescuing the *injured fair* from total neglect, and of vindicating my own character from the charge of having written such execrable poetry as ought to be strangled in the birth.

ODE

ODE TO MITHRA.

SUNG

BY THE PERSIAN ARMY AFTER ENGAGEMENT.

I.

PARENT OF LIGHT, whoſe burning eye
Pours on an hundred realms exhauſtleſs day;
Whether, beneath the polar ſky,
They ſtretch, where Tanais rolls his tardy ſtream,
Or glow beneath thy fervid, tropic ray:
MITHRA, we hail thee our immortal fire!
And, as we gaze on thy diffuſive beam,
Drink from thy fountain life, and catch rekindling fire!
Swell loud and deep the choral ſong,
To MITHRA'S praiſe the notes prolong,
Ye ſacred guardians of th' ETERNAL FLAME,
That, pure and bright, from Nature's birth
Through many a circling century hath glow'd,
Ere firſt, to warm the barren earth,
His ſhining chariot clave th' ætherial road:
Aloft your golden cenſers raiſe,
And, while a thouſand altars blaze,
With ſhouts the conſcious deity proclaim!

II.

Impatient for the breaking dawn,
Ere yet, emerging from the main,
Thy glowing axle pour'd the morn,
Our PERSIANS, ſ[illegible]d through many a plain.

With

With furious ſhouts demand the war.
Bright on yon mountain's pine-clad height
Beam'd the fair harbinger of day,
And ſoon we mark'd thy radiant car,
In glory burſting on the ſight,
Mount ſwiftly up the ſapphire way!
Inſtant a thouſand trumpets ſound,
A thouſand chiefs in arms appear,
And high their glitt'ring banners bear;
The harneſs'd ſteed reſponſive neighs,
And, while his footſteps ſpurn the ground,
His eye-balls burn, his noſtrils blaze!

III.

What ſtranger youths of noble mein,
Ye PERSIANS, mingle with your valiant train,
Of aſpect dauntleſs but ſerene,
Whoſe glitt'ring helms in air ſublimely tow'r;
And on their ſullen brows, that breathe diſdain,
Contempt of death and ſtern defiance low'r!
In their fluſh'd cheeks the mantling blood,
That bounds impatient through each throbbing vein,
Mounts in a richer fuller flood,
Imprinting deep the warrior's ſcarlet ſtain!
To virtue and to glory dear,
From SUSA's proud imperial tow'rs they come,
The chief to fall on an untimely bier,
His comrades to return with laurels home!
By thee led on to victory,
And glowing with thy own immortal flame,
To arms with kindred rage they fly,
And half the danger ſhare, and half the fame.

Hark!

IV.

Hark! GLORY from yon craggy height,
Where cloath'd in glitt'ring adamant she stands,
Summons to war the sons of fight;
And, rolling round the field her eyes of flame,
Fires with heroic rage her favour'd bands!
High on her crest the burnish'd dragons glow,
While deeply drinking the eternal beam,
They shed pernicious light, and blast the with'ring foe!
Smite, loudly smite, the choral string,
Aloft the golden censer raise;
Let heav'n's bright arch with triumph ring,
And earth resound with MITHRA's praise!

V.

What frantic shrieks of wild despair
Come rolling on the burthen'd air!
The war-fiend pours his funeral yell;
While scarce the trumpet's pow'rful breath,
Scarce the loud clarion's ampler swell,
Drown the tumultuous groans of death!
Th' ASSYRIANS fly; in heaps around
Their bravest vet'rans strew the ground!
Shall wanton vengeance stain the brave,
Or rancour burn beyond the grave?
PERSIANS, th' ensanguin'd fight give o'er,
And sheathe your sabres steep'd in gore.
Though justice wide her falchion wave,
From insult still the brave forbear;
With palms array'd, with conquest crown'd,
The brightest glory's still to spare!
Swell loud and deep the choral song,
To MITHRA's praise the notes prolong,

Ye ſacred guardians of th' ETERNAL FLAME,
That, pure and bright, from Nature's birth
Through rolling centuries hath ceaſeleſs glow'd,
Ere firſt, to warm the barren earth,
His ſhining chariot clave th' ætherial road:
Aloft your golden cenſers raiſe,
And, while a thouſand altars blaze,
With ſhouts the conſcious deity proclaim!

THE author embraces this opportunity of informing his Indian friends, that conceiving the repreſentation of a *moral drama* to be by no means injurious to the manners of ſociety, nor contrary to the injunctions of an enlightened religion, he is, at his leiſure, preparing for public exhibition, a tragedy founded on a very different ſtory from that of PANTHEA, in which the admirers of modern tragedy and its ſplendid appendages, ſhall be amply gratified. It is entitled, THE FALL OF TIMUR, or, NADIR SHAH AT DELHI, in whoſe gaudy ſcenes will be diſplayed the ſtupendous magnificence of the famous peacock imperial throne, and the other regalia of India. The ſubject of this tragedy, which is the overthrow of a mighty empire, will probably excite a more general intereſt, and the maſſacre, which took place in that deſolated capital, will afford a more ample field for the exertion both of poetic and dramatic excellence. Criticiſm itſelf may, perhaps, not be diſpoſed to cavil, when it ſhall find, united in one drama, all that pomp

of

of diction, which to imperial Tragedy, when she appears with her "sceptered pall," is natural and necessary, all the glare of stage decoration; and all the horrid grandeur of public execution. The author trusts that it will be imputed to anxious diffidence of success, rather than to vanity, that in this place, he introduces to his readers the unhappy Indian monarch, who, in the midst of the general massacre, thus opens the fifth act.

MOHAMMED SHAH.

At length thy sun, O HINDOSTAN, is set!
And, like yon blushing orb, whose evening beam
Sheds its deep crimson o'er the western hills,
It set in blood!—but not, like that, to rise
With brighter glory and rekindled ray!....
The very temples are no longer sacred!
The antient, venerable, tombs, that hold
The ashes of our fathers, are defil'd!
And, undistinguished, by one common sword
The priests of BRAHMA and MOHAMMED bleed!....
Women of noblest rank, to kings allied,
Are from the Haram's chaste recesses dragg'd
To instant massacre!.... Thousands, to shun
The fierce barbarian's violating rage,
Plunge in devouring flames,—a milder foe!
Or down the dark abyss of yawning pits,
Or wells,* unfathomably deep, descend
Headlong,—to 'scape a more detested doom!....

DEATH,

Death, stern destroyer, from the race of Timur
Hath rent th' *imperial plume ;* with giant stride
Stalks through the streets of this vast capital,
And reigns supreme upon the throne of Delhi!

Having been thus introduced to the miserable, dethroned emperor of India, the reader may, possibly, not be displeased to hear the savage usurper himself.

Enter Nadir Shah. *(After having been fired at by some person unknown, from among the crowd.)*

Does mad Sedition point against our life
Th' assassin's coward arm?—Then take thy fill,
Impatient slaughter—glut thy thirsty spear
With carnage, ample as the bounds of Delhi!
I've heard that potent Prince, the fam'd Jehaun,
The deep foundations of her *rising* walls,
Cemented with the blood of human victims :
Once more, then, let the sanguine deluge roll,
And Hecatombs expiring mark their *fall.*
My butcher'd Persians shall have full revenge,
And their cold limbs, of sepulture depriv'd,
Bathe in luxurious tides of Indian gore.
By our great prophet, for this daring outrage,
I'll raise a pyramid of heads, sublime
As yon blue vault—whose soaring point shall tow'r
An everlasting trophy of my vengeance,
And teach how sacred are the lives of kings.

Exit Nadir.